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BY THE NARROW MARGIN of only one vote the Supreme Court has upheld freedom of press in the United States. Had Justice Roberts voted with the four reactionary members of the court, that portion of the Constitution which guarantees a free press would have been nullified. The issue was presented by the Minnesota newspaper "gag" law which provided that a publication might be suppressed whenever a district judge, without even a jury's advice, found that there had been regular publishing of "malicious, scandalous, and defamatory" articles. The Chief Justice, for the majority of the Supreme Court, while denouncing heedless assaults upon public men (he has himself felt the lash of violent press criticism on more than one occasion), rightly held that "the fact that liberty of the press may be abused by miscreant purveyors of scandal does not make any less necessary the immunity of the press from previous restraint in dealing with official misconduct." For redress there remain the libel laws. Had the decision gone the other way, the ways would also have been further opened toward breaching the Constitution in the matter of free speech and free assembly. It is now being nullified by countless mayors, sheriffs, public officials, and others who, by the simple device of declaring that a given meeting might endanger the public order, forbid the assemblage of all groups they dislike. The present decision preserves the press against one dangerous form of attack, and is a welcome indication of the liberal temper of the "new majority."

UNHAPPILY, CENSORSHIP of the press through the government's power over the mails has again been upheld in the courts. The Post Office order revoking the second-class mailing privileges of *Revolutionary Age*, a communistic journal, has been sustained by the United States Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Woolsey of the Southern New York District Court had previously ruled that he could not reverse a departmental order of this sort unless it were clearly wrong, and in the case of *Revolutionary Age* he could not find it wrong. Following close upon this decision another order was issued canceling the second-class privileges of the *Class Struggle*, a Communist minority organ edited by Albert Weisbord. Thus there are now five radical journals under the ban of the Post Office. The significance of this kind of censorship was discussed at length by Lawrence Rogin in *The Nation* for April 8. That the withdrawal of second-class privileges from these publications is not the work of an overzealous post-office official in New York, but appears rather to be part of a predetermined government campaign to hamper or suppress all radical publications is indicated by a statement from Frederick G. Mulker, superintendent of the classification section of the New York Post Office, that the order for cancellation of mailing privileges in each case has come from Washington. Attorneys for the American Civil Liberties Union, which has been aiding the publishers in their fight for a free press, are now considering taking the *Revolutionary Age* case to the United States Supreme Court.

THE HAPPINESS BOYS are irrepressible. Here is Dr. Julius Klein insisting, in the face of a week of widespread protests against the tariffs which are doing so much to intensify world-wide disaster, that our new tariff has had nothing whatever to do with the shrinkage of our exports. That shrinkage, he finds, is exactly the same, to within a fraction of 1 per cent, as the decline in exports during the depression of 1921. That is, of course, extremely encouraging to the exporter whose business is dropping out from under him. But never mind; Dr. Klein will find the silver lining even if the export figures should get steadily worse. And so will Herbert Hoover. His press bureau solemnly gave out after the Cabinet meeting on May 26 an announcement by the President that the Cabinet session, which was "devoted almost entirely to a study of the economic situation," had found "many favorable factors." When asked, however, what they were, we hasten to announce that "none of the Cabinet officers would say what 'favorable factors' had been found in the study of business conditions." That is certainly highly convincing; it must have heartened every one of our unemployed to read this—provided they have the pennies to spend on daily newspapers.

EVEN THE SPIRITS of the Happiness Boys must, however, have been a bit dampened by the attacks upon the sacred tariff made at the meeting of the National Foreign Trade Council which heard Mr. Hoover's own Julius in

its defense. There was Thomas W. Lamont. Being a conservative banker he did not quite dare to say what he really thought, so he concealed the dread word tariff under the euphemism "artificial barriers against foreign trade." Perhaps, being a Harvard graduate, he remembered hearing Professor Barrett Wendell say to his class that a euphemism is to literature what the fig leaf is to art. Other speakers, braver than Mr. Lamont, tore the fig leaf away and went after the tariff hammer and tongs. Thus Peter Fletcher, president of the National Council of Importers and Traders, was impious enough to demand that a special session of Congress should be called at once to effect a 25 per cent horizontal cut in all ad valorem rates and a 50 per cent reduction of all specific duties, even stating that the United States had been guilty of initiating "the greatest world-wide tariff war in history." All of which is bad enough, but how the Happiness Boys must have writhed to read that that irrepressible bad boy, David Lloyd George, in making an impassioned appeal for free trade, had declared that "if Britain abandons free trade now she will have betrayed a great trust. She will have bartered away a great inheritance for a mess of pottage. And what a mess!" On top of which he cited the United States several times as a horrible example of what protection can do to a country, finally concluding: "There are no bread lines, no penny lines, in this country [as in the United States]. There is more employment to the square mile in this country than in any other country in the world." As if this were not enough comes the news that Canada has again retaliated by raising its tariffs against the United States on 200 items, notably automobiles, steel, and foods.

"RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM" came in for another knock the other day at the opening session of the fifteenth International Labor Conference at Geneva. Speaking particularly of the European economic crisis, the British trade-union delegate, Edward Poulton, remarked that conditions in the United States had until recently been cited as "an example of what can be done by unfettered private enterprise in the absence of checks and safeguards," thereby casting doubt upon "the practicability of social progress by means of labor legislation." Mr. Poulton's conclusion, on the other hand, was that without the "legislative measures of social reform" that Europe has already adopted, the effects of the crisis there "would be infinitely more severe than in fact they are." The inference to be drawn, apparently, is that Europe might well have more labor legislation rather than less, and that private enterprise, in the form in which it has been allowed to dominate the business life of America, is looked upon by Europe as a grave warning. Even international cooperation in inquiry and debate, however, seems to frighten Washington, as witness the abrupt withdrawal of a duly appointed observer from the Geneva conference lest her presence should in some way constitute official recognition of the League. Unofficial observation, it would seem, has suddenly become a hazardous occupation.

PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS against the Vatican coupled with street fighting between groups of Fascist and Catholic youths have finally resulted in an order from Mussolini dissolving the organization known as the Catholic Action, and the many Catholic youth societies as well.

Under the terms of the Lateran treaty of 1929 the Vatican expressly agreed to keep the Catholic Action out of Italian politics. Lately, however, the Fascist press has accused members of this organization of becoming increasingly active in the political field, the suggestion being that the Catholics were working to undermine the Fascist regime. Underlying this situation is the long-standing rivalry between the church and the state, to which the Lateran treaty did not put an end. Mussolini wants the state to reign supreme in all affairs touching the lives of its citizens; the Vatican, though forced to accept political inferiority, still considers itself entitled to guide the spiritual welfare of the people. Restive under the restraints placed upon the church, and probably inspired in part by the Vatican, the organized followers of the Holy See doubtless have sought to give expression politically or otherwise to their resentment at this domination by the state. The immediate question is whether the Catholic Action has by its recent activities violated the Lateran treaty. If this can be proved, Mussolini was perhaps legally justified in ordering the dissolution of the organization. But in taking this stand he has succeeded in further antagonizing the church, and that may have its repercussions not alone in Italy, but also in other countries in which Catholicism is strong and upon whose continued good-will Italy so largely depends.

FREEDOM FOR HAITI is to come sooner than was expected if the plans of the State Department, as reported by the Washington correspondent of the *Baltimore Sun*, meet with the necessary cooperation in Haiti. According to this authority, the American marines are to be withdrawn within two years instead of waiting until 1936, the date recommended by the Forbes Commission, provided the Haitian government gives its approval and the replacement of American officials by Haitians goes on with satisfactory speed and efficiency. The customs service will still be administered by an American receiver, however, in order to guarantee the interest payments on the balance of a loan of \$16,000,000 made by the National City Bank of New York, some \$11,000,000 of which remains to be discharged by 1952, and it is expected that American sanitary officials will remain. With the withdrawal of the last of the American marines from Nicaragua set for January 1, 1933, it is possible that the close of Mr. Hoover's term two months later may see American forces out of all Caribbean countries. It is certainly to be hoped that Haiti may do its part in the matter, and that American domination, hateful to the Haitian people and discreditable to the United States, may soon end.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES of Ohio State University might possibly run a factory successfully, but they certainly make a bad fist of it when they try to run a university. In a formal statement signed jointly by the trustees and President Rightmire, they declare that the dismissal of Professor Herbert A. Miller (reported in *The Nation* of last week) was decided on a year ago and that he was informed of that decision, with the reasons for it, last fall. Those reasons, it appears, are the complaints of trembling Ohioans regarding his teachings on race and marriage, and some innocuous remarks made by him at a Nationalist meeting in Bombay a year ago—which speech, it seems, had "international aspects," though the British government raised

no objection. Professor Miller declares that he was given the impression, following conferences last autumn, that the whole matter of his dismissal had been dropped. In any case, it is a disgrace to higher education in the United States. Three thousand students have signed a petition asking Professor Miller's reinstatement. Not only the Miller case but the whole situation evidently ought to be investigated by the American Association of University Professors. We are happy to report that a memorial signed by some sixty of the leading members of the faculty is being presented to the trustees protesting against the extraordinary statement issued by the trustees in connection with the controversy over compulsory military training, criticizing the "unripe vociferations" of a "very few members of the faculty who were under no compulsion to come here and are under none to remain unless they can subscribe to the fundamental purposes of this university." We congratulate the faculty on accepting this brutal challenge, and we hope that they will wage war without quarter on the forces of ignorance and reaction intrenched in a backward board of trustees. Without question this is one of the most important of recent battles in the long struggle for academic freedom.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the Presbyterian Church, in session at Pittsburgh in the week following the decision of the Supreme Court in the Macintosh and Bland cases, took strong ground in opposition to the opinion of the majority of the court. It adopted a report in which "the assembly declares its belief that the right and duty of citizenship should not be conditioned upon the test of ability or willingness, contrary to conscience, to bear arms or to take part as a combatant in war." The battle for liberty of conscience must go on, and we are entitled to look to churches for a strong lead in that fight. The Presbyterians have led off well.

WHAT HAVE MEN to gain by rising to the height of nearly ten miles above the earth beyond the ability to say that they have gone higher than any other human beings? That question is yet to be answered by Professor Auguste Piccard and his assistant, Dr. Charles Kipfer, who have so happily completed their daring ascent in an air-tight aluminum gondola. If it was a genuine search for scientific truth instead of a mere stunt, the work of the two men will certainly be acclaimed, but there seems to be some considerable skepticism about the scientific value of anything that Professor Piccard may have observed on his trip into the stratosphere. He declares that they risked their lives "because we wished to be assured that cosmic rays at that height were ten times as powerful as after reaching the earth after passing through the atmosphere." Undoubtedly the answer as to whether the whole undertaking was worth while will be found when we get the detailed analyses of the Professor's findings. That he and his assistant are courageous enough is perfectly obvious. We confess, however, to getting very tired of aerial stunts. Why should Ruth Nichols seek to be the first woman to make a solo flight across the Atlantic, and why, oh, why, should Walter Lees and Frederick Brossy have remained aloft over eighty-four and one-half hours in order to break a record? An achievement of that kind is of no earthly value save in creating momentary notoriety for those who accomplished it.

Barbarus Americanus

THE American mayors who, as guests of the city of Paris and the French Colonial Exposition, are making a tour through France have succeeded in surpassing all records for gaucheness and bad manners so far held by Americans in a foreign land. Beginning with the reception at Le Havre, at which Mayor John C. Porter, of Los Angeles, and his wife left the table in high dudgeon because a toast of champagne was offered to the Presidents of the United States and of France, the mayors proceeded to quarrel wherever they went, usually noisily, and finally distinguished themselves when Mayor George S. Baker of Portland made a fifteen-minute oration before the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Paris, thus breaking the rule of silence there which has so far been invariably observed.

It is the old story over again of the American marine in China who, shown a shrine on which a taper had not been extinguished for 700 years, pinched it between thumb and forefinger, saying: "It's out now." Too many Americans in foreign lands, from the American Legionnaires up and down, have not troubled to acquaint themselves with the most dearly held customs of the countries they visited, have lugged out their American provincialisms, have been loud-mouthed, quarrelsome, vulgar, insistent on their "rights" as citizens of the greatest little old country on God's green earth. What the urbane French, with a tradition of politeness and suave manners, think of the present exhibition one can only imagine. It is reported that the affair of Mayor Porter was regarded as an "amusing incident." That gentleman declared indignantly, when questioned:

Yes, we are dry. We believe in following the American Constitution when on foreign soil. We have not taken one drink since we left the United States and we don't intend to touch alcoholic stimulants while in France.

And the saddest feature of the matter is that there will be plenty of persons in this country who will, in their fanatical advocacy of the cause of prohibition, be found to applaud this bit of bad manners.

There must be something about foreign travel which breaks down the native good sense of people in general. For while Americans are probably the worst behaved when they appear en masse somewhere away from home, the Germans are notoriously noisy and vulgar as tourists, the English are as notoriously narrow and provincial, and the French lose much of their urbanity when they leave their native land. The answer probably is that when one is away from one's own fireside and customs and language one becomes afraid and insecure. What is strange is still damned. It is different, it is frightening, it needs to be attacked. The behavior of visiting American Legionnaires in Paris, so opposite to that of Mayor and Mrs. Porter, is but another aspect of the same fear.

Keeping this in mind, the tour of the American mayors seems to merit pity more than anger. Possibly if they ever visit Paris again, they will have learned to be less frightened by it. Meanwhile one can only hope that they are not seized with the notion of flooding Napoleon's tomb to make a swimming pool or painting the Arc de Triomphe red, white, and blue.

Mr. Hoover Denies Europe

YES, Mr. Hoover denies Europe—denies it sympathy, good-will, cooperation, a helping hand, any cogent and worth-while expression of fellowship in its present misery. One touch of such suffering ought to make the whole world kin. But Mr. Hoover neither feels, nor sees, nor moves. He is apparently blind to the fact that Europe stretches out its hands to us in despair as it sinks steadily into the quicksands of unemployment, economic disorganization, financial distress. He is content to blame Europe for our ills on the one hand, and to say on the other that we can none the less work ourselves out by ourselves, without regard for the authors of our misery.

It was in Cleveland on October 2 last that he declared that "this depression is world-wide. Its causes and effects lie only partly in the United States," adding that "a perhaps even larger immediate cause of our depression has been the effect upon us from the collapse in prices following overproduction of important raw materials, mostly in foreign countries." This was a sound and correct, if strangely phrased, statement as far as it went. It surely was intended to make it clear to his countrymen that they were caught in the meshes of a world-wide depression. Since then every development here and abroad has enforced the truth that this industrial crisis is affecting more countries more acutely than any other recorded in the modern industrial age. It has brought home the stale truism that the world is now a small entity which cannot be well if a single part of it is ill.

But what has Mr. Hoover done to grapple with the disease as a world-wide infection which in largest measure came to us from abroad? Frankly, nothing, from the international point of view, beyond giving the excellent advice that Europe should disarm—perhaps even a hint to Europe that without disarmament there can be no question of a revision of debts and reparations. His lack of initiative is no doubt in part due to his having said, with his habitual lack of intellectual clearness, in the very speech from which we have quoted, that it was not necessary for us to "wait upon the recovery of the rest of the world. We can make a very large degree of recovery independently of what may happen elsewhere." Eight months have come and gone since these words were spoken, and each month has shown the error of Mr. Hoover's assumption. We have not only not made a "large degree of recovery independently" of events elsewhere, we are worse off than ever. Our export trade continues to fall off; sixty-four of our railways have just reported that their net income for April of this year was 37.2 per cent less than in April, 1930, and no less than 57.6 per cent less than their net revenues in April, 1929. Our national deficit is officially admitted to be beyond one billion dollars, and on the stock market the values of the very best securities continue to sink. If this constitutes working ourselves out of the depression without waiting for the recovery of Europe, we do not understand the meaning of words.

If it does not indicate the need of international action, what could? The attempts of the sugar-growers of the world to combine under Mr. Chadbourne's guidance, the

frantic calls for an international agreement on silver, the suggestion that there should be a world dictator to deal with the wheat situation, the efforts of the Russians at Geneva to bring about an economic understanding in order to end dumping and needless economic rivalries, the demands from all quarters for the lowering of the tariff barriers that hem international trade—all these prove not only the need of international action, but the growing intensity of the demand for it. But Mr. Hoover does not move. True, he sent a delegate to the International Wheat Conference in London, but his representative took so stubborn and unyielding a position against any international agreement to limit production that debate was rendered useless—"torp doed at the start," the dispatches from the conference read.

But what, we hear the question raised, could Mr. Hoover do in this emergency, limited as he is by Congress in dealing with our international relations? Primarily, the mere announcement that he had begun to busy himself with international affairs, with a view to cooperation and aid, would send a thrill of hope and encouragement all around the world, and would in itself be a tremendous blow to the utter discouragement of the peoples of Europe. Next, Mr. Hoover could take advantage of the meeting the week of June 1 at Chequers between Chancellor Brüning and his Foreign Minister and Prime Minister MacDonald and his Foreign Secretary to urge the coming together of a small group of the rulers of Europe, together with the best possible American representative, to see what could be done in the way of removing the several hindrances to world trade and world recovery. He would have to be ready at least to talk about the general reduction of the protective tariffs. He would have to permit at such a conference a full and free discussion of the debts and reparations, whether he felt in sympathy with such a discussion or not, because if Europe goes on as it is much longer, the first steps toward asking for a moratorium will have to be taken by Germany, in which case the United States cannot avoid facing the debts and reparations situation. Such a conference could, moreover, discuss the disarmament which lies so close to Mr. Hoover's heart; it is not impossible that if he himself took the lead in a concrete proposal, the parties to such a conference might present a united front at Geneva next winter.

But the great thing is that such a conference, especially if it met on the invitation of Mr. Hoover and he kept in direct telephonic communication with it, would be able to reach some definite conclusions such as can never be arrived at by foreign ministers or finance ministers. At least it would establish once for all whether there can be cooperation or not, whether Europe must go down merely because of the inability of the heads of the several nations, including our own, to deal with the extraordinary emergency which confronts us. No greater opportunity has ever come to an American President, save only Mr. Wilson, to lead the world and to render it incalculable service. Of this every enlightened person in Europe, whatever his country or his political faith, is absolutely certain. But that marvelous opportunity knocks in vain at Mr. Hoover's door.

The Business Innocents

ARE American business leaders innocent of all knowledge of the facts of our industrial history and of the elementary principles of international trade? We are almost inclined to answer yes after reading the address of James A. Farrell, president of the United States Steel Corporation, before the National Foreign Trade Council.

"While it is vital to our prosperity as a nation," Mr. Farrell tells us, "to find a market overseas for at least 10 per cent of our total production, we should not forget the rock from whence successful foreign trade is hewn, the foundations that have been so well and deeply laid in our home market." Does Mr. Farrell really mean, as he seems to, that we are in fact making a 10 per cent "surplus" of goods in general that we do not need here and so must somehow sell abroad? Can it be that he does not know that in the last analysis we exchange goods for goods?

"Seeing that the unfavorable conditions apply indiscriminately to all countries, low-tariff, high-tariff, and free-trade alike," Mr. Farrell thinks it "must be obvious that tariff discussions . . . are of academic interest only." Can it be possible that Mr. Farrell does not see the entirely obvious fact that when one country cuts down its imports by raising its tariff walls it must correspondingly cut down the exports of the countries that sell to it, damaging their prosperity as much as its own, whether they are themselves high-tariff or low-tariff countries? The high tariff walls everywhere, more than any other single cause, have been responsible for choking the channels of world trade.

But worse is to come. Because 13,000,000 immigrants landed in the United States between 1901 and 1914, "we should not overlook the part our country is now playing in carrying a large share of Europe's burden of unemployment." Was ever more pernicious nonsense spoken by a responsible man? No industry, probably, has done more than that of which Mr. Farrell is a leader to bring in and exploit the immigrants whose presence he deplors. None has been more completely irresponsible in creating unemployment through irregular operation. And now Mr. Farrell has the monumental assurance to attribute American unemployment to pre-war immigration.

A single further example of the intellectual quality of this pronouncement: "An essential requirement of the present economic situation is an advance in commodity prices. . . . It is rising prices that stimulate buying and consumption, and a return of prosperity." Here is an amazing example of Christian Science economics. Rising prices in the past have often resulted in greater buying, because buyers assume that they indicate the possibility of a real shortage. Mr. Farrell seems to believe that we can all conspire together to deceive one another into the belief that our huge surpluses of raw materials are really shortages. His proposal is on all fours with the suggestion that we should blow our thermometers to seventy in winter instead of installing furnaces. Not until our industrial leaders have stopped talking such nonsense and have turned to a genuine analysis of the international and domestic factors that stand in the way of a sound readjustment are we likely to see any real and prolonged turn for the better.

Spain and Rome

JUDGED by the trend of history as shown in Italy in 1860-61, in France in 1905, and in Portugal in 1913, the Vatican appears destined to defeat again in its struggle to retain what it once deemed its inalienable rights and privileges. Republican Spain is making it clear that it wishes to divorce the church from the state. It is not seeking to do this by burning convents and church buildings, for by now it has been fairly well established that the mob action of a few weeks ago was the handiwork of monarchists and extremists who wished to set the overwhelmingly Catholic population against the new government. Rather would it proceed by more peaceful means to deprive Catholicism of its present standing as the state religion. Under the monarchy the constitution recognized but one religion; the state maintained the church property and paid the clergy; the higher clergy enjoyed special political and civil privileges; government employees were required to be Catholics; religious teaching was compulsory in the schools; the church completely controlled secondary education; other religions were permitted but under such restrictions as to make it almost impossible for them to exist. The Republican Government has indicated that it wants to change all this, placing all religions on the same footing. When it decreed freedom of religion, however, the Holy See retaliated by calling the Papal Nuncio to Rome and by declining to receive the new Spanish ambassador.

In fairness it must be stated that the Vatican was at first inclined to accept the Spanish republic as an established fact, and to yield gracefully on the question of the separation of church and state. But the Spanish hierarchy, jealous of its privileged position, refused to surrender, thereby making a peaceful solution of the church problem in Spain extremely difficult, if not impossible. As a result of the stand taken by the Spanish clergy the Vatican's opposition to the republic has stiffened. Some observers believe that the Pope's recent denunciation of socialism was directed against the Spanish Cabinet, half of whose members are Socialist. Whether this is true or not, the Papal encyclical has hurt rather than helped the position of the church. The remaining members of the Cabinet, all of whom are devout Catholics, appreciate full well that no moderate government can be had in Spain without the cooperation of the Socialists. Were the Socialists to leave the government, either because of the antagonism displayed toward their party by the Holy See or because of opposition to their anti-church stand from the Catholic members of the Cabinet, the resulting crisis would probably bring a radical government into power, and such a government would not be likely to stand upon ceremony in abolishing the established church.

It is probable that the controversy will be allowed to hang fire pending the outcome of the Cortes elections this month. Only the Cortes can under the present constitution denounce the concordat governing the official relations between the Vatican and Madrid which has been in force since 1851. Should the elections go as heavily Republican as did the municipal elections which immediately preceded the abdication of King Alfonso, there is every likelihood that the new assembly will vote to abrogate the concordat.

I Work for Russia

V. The American Engineer at Work*

By WALTER ARNOLD RUKEYSER

AN American engineer working in a foreign country is in one sense a member of our diplomatic corps. The opinion of all the various persons he meets concerning America and Americans is directly molded by their reaction to his individual personality. This is particularly true of the American working in Russia, where we have no professional diplomats to help us. We must get out of our own scrapes, always bearing in mind that the attitude of Russians toward America depends almost wholly upon our own personal actions.

American mining engineers hitherto have for the most part gained foreign experience in Latin American countries, and because of the well-known mining opportunities in these lands our profession has in the main prepared itself for such work by a study of Spanish. In my experience it is very rare for an American engineer to have a speaking knowledge of German, which was the language used by at least one out of every three of the Russian executives I met, and certainly there is not one American engineer in ten thousand who has any knowledge of the Russian language, at least among those who have not worked in Russia. The great difficulties of that language for a foreigner are too well known to need mention.

On the other hand, while many educated Russians speak German, comparatively few know English. Further, even though the Russian interpreter speaks and understands everyday English, he cannot be expected to know technical engineering English, made up of words that not one American in a thousand would himself understand if he were not trained for the engineering profession. The first great difficulty of the average American engineer working in Russia, evidently enough, is the barrier of language.

But there are other difficulties encountered in working for the Soviet Union, particularly by the American who is working out in the "sticks" alone and not as a member of a comparatively large colony of his countrymen. To an even greater extent than elsewhere he represents all of America and all Americans to those with whom he comes in contact. His job requires infinite tact, diplomacy, understanding, and patience—not because the Russian people are difficult to get along with, quite the contrary, but rather because conditions of working and living are so utterly different from his past experience. First, he is working not for private interests with highly centralized authority and responsibility, but for the government itself. Second, he is working in a country whose psychology is that of a nation at war. Third, he is in the midst of a brand-new and gigantic experiment in sociology and political economy. Fourth, he finds himself cut off from his usual recreations and the other features of the bourgeois existence he leads in other parts of the world. Finally, he encounters the suspicions harbored by many Russians, more or less naturally under the present circumstances,

of any "representative" of a capitalistic country, the people's conscious or subconscious fear of intercourse with foreign specialists, the possibility of professional and economic jealousies, and the red tape and inertia existing wherever government controls industry. His relations with his associates are further complicated by the fact that often the life or liberty of a Russian coworker hangs on the report of the foreign specialist.

Yet all these difficulties are today being more or less successfully met by hundreds of foreign engineers working in Russia. Some men magnify these handicaps in their mind to the point where they can no longer work efficiently; they develop a very bad state of "nerves." But for the most part—and this is particularly true of the mining engineer who has perforce "batted around" most of the world under all sorts of conditions—the American soon adjusts himself to his environment and finds that most of the supposed obstacles may be easily overcome or are non-existent in his own individual case. Now let me describe my own experience in getting things done in present-day Russia.

On our first trip into the Soviet Union, after most courteous treatment at the border at the hands of English-speaking officials, my wife and I were met at the railway station in Moscow by the interpreter-representative of our trust. But although he was pleasant and accommodating to the nth degree, his interpreting was confined to German! In retrospect I can see that this was largely my fault. I had told them at Amtorg in New York that I knew a bit of university German. This in Europe means something, and that, coupled with the Teutonic sound of my surname, led them to expect far more than my course in German 101-02 and my reading of Heine warranted. However, I *had* to speak German, and therefore I threw aside all inhibitions and *did*. Words and phrases learned in my college days, sounds that had been tucked away since childhood, when, thank heaven, I had had a German governess, seemed to pop out from the nowhere of my subconscious mind—and after a little, of a sudden, I could at least make myself understood.

All our travel needs were smoothly and efficiently taken care of by our interpreter. Luggage was disposed of, taxis were provided, and a suite of two rooms and bath at the hotel was in order for us. For the American entering Russia much depends upon the individual interpreter assigned to him. One will be found efficient, the next not. The Trans-Siberian express, which at that time of trouble with China ran only three times weekly, was crowded with people trying to reach the Far East before the anticipated serious trouble broke out. We therefore had to wait several days in Moscow for accommodations, and when finally we were told that everything was "set" we found ourselves in a compartment with two Englishmen in what was formerly a *wagon-lit* car. This was what is known as second class. I pointed out to our guide that my contract specifically stated we were to have first-class compartments throughout, con-

* The fifth of a series of six articles. The sixth, on the Outside Life of the American Engineer, will appear in the issue of June 17.—EDITOR THE NATION.

sisting of two berths with lavatory facilities, and that a two-day trip for my wife under other circumstances unfortunately could not be thought of. Were I alone, *nichevo*. I fully understood the difficulty of obtaining accommodations and realized that my presence at the mines was earnestly required. Yet, although that was Friday and the next train did not leave until Tuesday, the representative of our trust very courteously and pleasantly acquiesced, and we were allowed to spend the week-end in Moscow amusing ourselves at our own discretion, until the stipulated type of accommodation was available.

Let me go on to our experiences during the past year, when we were no longer strangers in Russia, when our German had become more or less fluent, and a smattering of Russian was at our command. We traveled, upon arrival, from Moscow to Leningrad on the business of the trust. In the latter city are located many if not most of the scientific and technical bodies which control practically all the work going on in the Soviet Union. Here is the great N. T. S., the supreme engineering control of all plans and methods, composed of the leading Russian engineers, scientists, technicians, professors, and academicians. Here also are located the Mining Institute and the extremely modern and advanced "Mechanobra" and "Mechanobra Project." These last are respectively the experimental laboratories and plants where processes are worked out and proved on a commercial scale, and the design bureau where the detailed working drawings may be completed after a successful process has been developed. This service is of a consulting nature and is purchased by the various trusts which do not have facilities for such work at their own plants. The laboratories are among the most finely equipped and organized to be seen anywhere in the world. The technicians are among the best in Russia, practically all of them having been sent abroad by the Soviet to acquire the last word in practical as well as technical advance in all industries and sciences. The American consultant to a Russian trust usually, or at least in my own case, must work with Mechanobra. Many of the engineers speak a good technical English. Practically all with whom I came in contact spoke at least German. They have apparently a deep respect for the American specialist and are a splendid set of men with whom to work. They extend every courtesy and convenience to the foreign engineer.

Any plans drawn either at the offices of the trusts or by Mechanobra Project must be passed upon by the N. T. S. before being put into effect. (These are the initials of the Nauchnii Tekhnicheskii Soviet, or, in plain English, Scientific Technical Council.) This supreme engineering council, composed of some thirty or forty members, reviews every detail of the project in question. I personally appeared before them during one entire four-day sitting, beginning at nine-thirty or ten in the morning and lasting with recesses until possibly one the following morning. I had made rather radical recommendations concerning the entire work at Asbest, mining, milling, and general. Many of these men knew English well, some had worked in America for many years, all were of the highest order of scientific and engineering ability. Each point was threshed out in its entirety. Each reason and explanation of what I wished done was thoroughly examined, discussed, debated. I drank tea to the saturation point; I smoked until Vesuvius shook with envy. It was much like being a candidate for a doctor's de-

gree in an American university. It was nerve-racking, especially since each sentence must be translated for the benefit of those who did not know English. But I could see the necessity for it all, I did not get impatient—and the plans and methods were approved.

The approval of what I had suggested meant discontinuance of certain methods which had already been inaugurated. It also meant the probable imprisonment of those responsible for the former plans. A great deal of premeditated sabotage is going on in Russia (today probably much less than formerly) on the part of those still antagonistic to the present regime. This is the opinion of most of the American specialists with whom I have discussed the matter. By no means all the mistakes or slowing down of tempo can be attributed simply to ignorance or lack of practical experience. Moreover, while the Russian engineers, at least those of the old school, are possibly the finest theoretically trained technicians in the world, they have not, in the main, had an opportunity since 1914 to study at first hand the tremendous mass of new technique which has been developed abroad since that time.

I have attended the trials of several engineers accused of malfeasance. Contrary to the general opinion and to accounts published in this country, I have found them to be entirely open and conducted along strictly legal lines. In most cases which have come under my personal observation sentences have been commuted to a return to former employment with fines. That seems to be the trend in punishment for inefficiency, premeditated or otherwise, today. It is for the American engineer to hold himself strictly aloof and non-partisan, and, above all, completely non-political. And that is why the Soviet officials seem to have such great faith in the American technicians. They know that we are interested only in our work, and want to do it to the best of our knowledge, experience, and ability. Whatever mistakes we make will be honest ones, due for the most part to lack of knowledge of men and materials in Russia.

At the mines I enjoyed a comfortable office, and whatever facilities were available were extended to me in my work. The younger men assigned me were respectful, competent, and mentally alert. Any recommendations which I wished put into effect I discussed with the technical director, and if they were of sufficient importance, they were considered at a specially called meeting of the entire technical staff, after which the technical director issued the necessary executive instructions. I found always an open mind and readiness to cooperate. In one case, in order to prove my ideas, I was placed in direct operating charge of a group of mines until the recommendations which I had made could be proved or disproved.

Often, when it was believed that the efficiency of any unit was lagging, I was asked to step into the gap, take charge, and try to remedy the trouble. I always found the director, engineer, and subalterns of such a particular unit more than anxious to work with me. The friendliest of relations, with no apparent jealousy or antagonism, always existed, once a sympathetic understanding was set up.

Frequently commissionsions of various sorts came out from Moscow or Leningrad. They might constitute the "control," or might be studying the question whether or not the American engineer was being "exploited" to the fullest. Sometimes these commissions handicapped our work by the

introduction of red tape, but for the most part they came to me for suggestions and conference, with extremely constructive results.

In concluding my discussion of this phase of the subject, I must touch on the Russians' love for voluminous and detailed reports. The experienced American engineer, by train-

ing and instinct as well as by his previous experience, knows quickly and surely what is to be done. The Russian wants everything set down in writing and calculations. Then follows interminable debate. But there is a way to overcome even this lost motion. Many of us have found out how much can be accomplished with a sense of humor.

Organized Charity Turns Censor

By ELMER RICE

FOR the past seventeen years I have been a practicing playwright, and in the course of my professional life I have spent a good deal of time and energy fighting, in the interests of a free theater and free speech, the would-be censors and purifiers of the stage, from John S. Sumner to John Haynes Holmes. There is no medium of public utterance, whether it be the press, the stage, the lecture platform, the screen, or the radio, which is exempt from close scrutiny and unrelenting pressure by sectarian, racial, professional, civic, and patriotic organizations. This unofficial censorship is remarkably active and remarkably efficient in its control of the several forms of popular entertainment. The easy successes of the self-appointed censors in this field are due, in the main, to the fact that the entrepreneurs of stage, screen, and radio are, for the most part, persons whose unblinking gaze is concentrated upon the box office and to whom a diminution of professional integrity and dignity means much less than the loss of revenue which might conceivably ensue as the result of the withdrawal of patronage of a few over-zealous Methodists, dentists, Zionists, Italians, delicatessen dealers, or American Legionnaires.

To give a random example of how this group pressure operates, I shall summarize three separate items clipped from a single issue of *Variety* (May 6, 1931). The first is a dispatch from Chicago which states that Edgar Wallace's play "On the Spot" had to be "toned down" before it could be presented upon the stage in that metropolis. *Variety's* correspondent declared:

Citizens' committee and Mayor Cermak "advised" the Shuberts to cut all references to Chicago, on the grounds that the cracks might give people a bad impression about Chicago. Shuberts quickly agreed. They have too much money invested in Loop theatrical property to take a chance on antagonizing City Hall. If these big boys are crossed, they are apt to suddenly find official complaints to make against these properties. . . . Legally, it's understood that the city fathers have no right to declare a play censorable because it chooses Chicago, or any other city, as its locale.

The second item bears a Hollywood date line and reads as follows:

In making a film version of the stage play "Alexander Hamilton," Warners' will go even farther than the play in whitewashing the lives of several historical characters. Due to the insistence of the Daughters of the Revolution, Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe will be presented as schoolbook histories paint them. Story the film will unfold was explained to representatives of the D. A. R., and its soft-pedaled condition okayed by them.

The third story is even more fantastic. It deals with

the difficulties of radio entertainers in finding material which will offend no one. Says *Variety*:

Dial fans take quick offense at what they believe to be slights to their religion, nationality, city, school, make of auto, political party, or the way they comb their hair. . . . It was thought that the limit had been reached when a local station drew more than 8,000 protesting letters when one of its entertainers cracked that he couldn't become a druggist because he didn't know how to make sandwiches. . . . As for the stations themselves, the censorship thing becomes more and more stringent. Performers are sweating to find proper comedy material because of the must notes. It seems that no matter what they say, they're bound to step on somebody's toes.

It is only recently that I have had personally to combat the efforts of an influential and well-organized group to censor one of my own plays. Remarkable as it may seem, my determined antagonists have been none other than those professional doers of good, the administrators of organized charity. It is a story which should interest the dispassionate observer of the American scene.

On January 10, 1929, there was presented at the Playhouse in New York a play of mine entitled "Street Scene." The play is an attempt to portray objectively certain aspects of life in a mean quarter of New York. It depends for its effect upon the introduction of a great variety of metropolitan types and the accumulation of innumerable incidents which are designed to produce a totality of effect in the same manner in which a painter achieves his effects by piling up innumerable minute brush strokes. The play contains about seventy-five characters, approximately fifty of whom have speaking parts. One of these characters happens to be a social worker. She appears early in the first act, is on the stage for perhaps five minutes, and is not seen or mentioned again (except for one passing reference) throughout the remainder of the play. But despite her insignificant role, this Miss Simpson has apparently set the organized charities of the country by the ears. The fact that I have portrayed her as not wholly lovable is apparently more than the professional performers of works of misericordia have been able to endure, and for nearly two and a half years they have been unceasing in their efforts to make me glorify the American charity worker.

The opening gun was fired by Mr. William Hodson, who on January 25, 1929, wrote me in his capacity of executive director of the Welfare Council of New York City. "It may be," said Mr. Hodson in part, "that among the thousands of social workers in this city, there is one who would act as you have made a social worker act in your play, but

the words that you have put into her mouth and the attitude that you have had her take are in no sense characteristic." After several more paragraphs of protest Mr. Hodson concluded by saying that he was sure that his letter voiced "the sentiments of the 700 social agencies constituting the Welfare Council." I did not mind having Mr. Hodson express his personal dissatisfaction, but the official tone of the letter and its suggestion of group pressure galled me a little, and I replied with considerable asperity. I said:

In the course of many years' work among the settlement houses of New York I have encountered not one but many representatives of social agencies who . . . strikingly resemble the woman portrayed in "Street Scene." Whether or not her attitude is characteristic of social workers seems to me to be beside the point. "Street Scene" is not a sociological treatise and there is no intention to generalize about anything or anybody. . . . Whether or not you voice the sentiments of 700 social agencies I do not know. . . . Only politicians allow their conduct to be determined by the probable effect upon the German vote, or the Baptist vote, or the social workers' vote. No artist who is worth his salt is deterred from portraying life as he sees it by any such consideration.

I heard no more from Mr. Hodson, but on February 1 Miss Frances Taussig of the Jewish Social Service Association wrote me upbraiding me for my lack of familiarity with social work and social workers and offering the services of a former acquaintance of mine (a young lady whom I had not seen in fifteen years) to reveal to me the whole truth about social workers. I declined this offer with thanks, describing in detail my intimate acquaintance with dozens of social workers. Miss Taussig, however, returned to the attack and argued that "the effectiveness of social work is surely harmed by the plausible portrait which you draw of the social worker you may have come across in days past."

I pass over numerous letters (some of them anonymous) received from individual social workers and come to Miss Elizabeth Dutcher of the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities. Miss Dutcher charges me with being "emotionally prejudiced against social workers." She says, "We have difficulty enough to get the public to give us the money we need." She suggests that I "modify the offending lines" and invites me to a staff meeting "in possible preparation for such modification." I wrote to Miss Dutcher that I felt myself to be already sufficiently acquainted with social workers and added, "I am glad of the realistic note which you sound in your last paragraph. . . . Nothing must be done or said to interfere with contributions, for when the contributions cease what will happen to all the jobs?"

About this time a friend informed me that he had seen a story in the *Survey* to the effect that an indignation meeting of social workers had been held over the part in my play, but that the "cooler heads" had prevailed and it had been decided to take no action. I was curious to know just what action might have been taken, but subsequent experience with the dispensers of charity has instructed me. The next move was to try to get at me through a man prominent in welfare work, whom I have known and respected for many years. (I withhold his name to spare him any possible embarrassment.) This plan did not work either, for the chosen envoy happened to be a man of integrity first and a welfare worker second. On April 25 he wrote me as follows:

Two or three of my social-work friends who knew that I had met you some years ago told me they thought I ought to protest against your picture of the social worker. Of course, we both know that there are many social workers of an entirely different type and it would have been gratifying to my professional self-respect to have had another one come in to show this other side. But I regret to have to agree that your picture of a certain kind is not overdrawn.

The next protestant to be heard from was Mr. Lindsay Bradford, vice-president of the City Bank Farmers Trust Company. Mr. Bradford wrote me on October 22, 1929 (after the play had been running nearly a year), in his capacity as a member of the Council of the Charity Organization Society. Mr. Bradford assured me that social workers "carry on their work with kindness and sympathy" and explained, in some detail, how the play could be altered to meet the requirements of organized charity. He added that in his judgment "the possibility certainly exists that the efforts on the part of charities to obtain contributions for their work will be hindered by such a disagreeable portrayal of a charity worker." By this time I was getting pretty tired of being badgered by the charity workers and in the course of a lengthy reply to Mr. Bradford I said:

I think it is rather remarkable that an author should be asked to alter his play in order to make it easier for organized charity to obtain contributions. If the incidental portrayal of a charity worker in a play can actually impair the work of the charity organizations, then it seems to me that there must be something basically wrong with these organizations. It is a curious fact that all the protests which I have received have come from persons actively interested in the administration of organized charity. A psychologist might say that the reason that the charity workers protested so strongly against the falsity of the portrayal in "Street Scene" is that they recognize the truth of it.

The scene now shifts to Minneapolis, where the Western company of "Street Scene" was scheduled to play during the week of March 10, 1930. On March 6 Mr. Paul C. Salsberry, general secretary of the Family Welfare Association of Minneapolis, wrote to Mr. A. E. Zonne, chairman of the Civic Theater Committee, protesting against the characterization of the charity worker. Says Mr. Salsberry:

We had some unpleasant experiences particularly with clients after the presentation of the film "It" several years ago, and also after "Undercurrent," which ran at the Orpheum last summer. But the characterizations in these were much less extreme than in "Street Scene" and I fear the results will be bad in proportion. It would seem a relatively simple matter to drop that particular portion of the play. . . . It seems ungracious to write in this critical way to a committee which is doing as much as yours is doing to revive good plays for Minneapolis, but it seems fair to try to anticipate the effect this particular section of "Street Scene" may have on social work in this community.

This letter was forwarded to the business manager of "Street Scene," which was then playing in Chicago, with a covering letter from Mr. Zonne in which he suggested that something be done in order "to meet the views of a host of the best people of Minneapolis, whom we must count on for your patrons." The next day the business manager of the play received the following telegram from the executive com-

mittee of the Twin-City Chapter American Association of Social Workers:

Executive committee representing social work profession in Minneapolis and St. Paul agitated by caricature of social worker role Miss Simpson in Street Scene Stop Social work is young profession frequently misunderstood Stop Every misunderstanding costs community money Stop Lines in Street Scene give false impression of social worker Stop Would appreciate attempt to modify

This had its desired effect. The producer of the play, envisaging the loss of a few dollars at the box office, violated his contractual obligations to me, and without my knowledge altered the scenes in which the charity worker appears. Unfortunately, I did not learn of it until after the play had left Minneapolis, when I received letters from several members of my cast telling me that the scenes had been so garbled as to be unintelligible.

The next scene is laid in Hollywood, whence I have just returned. In the course of my preparation of the screen version of "Street Scene" I was given, for my guidance, a letter which Mr. Samuel Goldwyn, the purchaser of the motion-picture rights, had received from Colonel Jason S. Joy of the Association of Motion Picture Producers (the Will Hays organization). Colonel Joy's letter, after suggesting a number of deletions to meet the requirements of various censorship bodies—such as the omission of all "hell's" and "damn's" and of passing references to the Prince of Wales and Mussolini—said:

As a matter of public policy we believe that it is quite important not to characterize Miss Simpson as a charity worker unless she is shown as a kindly and tolerant person. The public groups, as well as the many prominent and wealthy philanthropists interested in the development of charity work, will be very quick to resent any slighting reference to charitable organizations and to the workers devoting their time to that cause. For this reason we suggest that, unless some radical change be made in the characterization of Miss Simpson, it be definitely indicated that she is an agent for the party who is dispossessing the unfortunate family.

I protested vigorously against making this change and succeeded in winning over to my point of view the executives of the Goldwyn organization and the director of the picture. Colonel Joy was then called into consultation. He stated that while he himself saw nothing objectionable in the characterization and while it did not violate the so-called "Hays code" or the requirements of any local censorship body, the influence of prominent citizens, interested in community chests and local charity organizations, was so great that the exploitation and exhibition of the picture could be seriously hampered as a result of pressure which could be brought to bear upon local exhibitors and municipal censorship bodies. Colonel Joy has given me permission to quote him as saying that *even before the picture rights had been sold*, the Association of Motion Picture Producers had received numerous letters from charity organizations demanding that the offending characterization be changed upon the screen. No motion-picture company can withstand organized boycott and organized blackmail. The investment is too large to be jeopardized for anything so insubstantial as the principle of freedom of expression. It begins to look as though America is going to be safe for organized charity after all.

In the Driftway

ACCORDING to private advices from New Haven, it has become the fashion among Yale undergraduates to sneer at the Harkness grandeur in general and the overstuffed Gothic magnificence of the new library in particular—just as it became the fashion some years ago to wear raccoon coats and condescend to William Lyon Phelps. The criticism of Yale's architecture has become so widespread and so bitter that there is even a rumor of an about-face to colonial when the next billion clinks down the Yale chute. (By the way, is there a single medieval treasure room in those piles of Harkness stone? The Drifter hopes so—a treasure room with filing cabinets full of canceled checks.)

* * * * *

NOW the Drifter has always had a healthy respect for the sneers of the young. He thinks they should be encouraged and acted upon rather than dismissed. Moreover, he has been from the first one of Yale's severest critics in the matter of its architecture. Quite aside from any considerations of religious or aesthetic consistency, it has always seemed to him absurd to house a modern American university in walls three feet thick when there is no danger of attack from any enemy more medieval than an idea. As for two Harkness offenses against intelligence and morality—first, the application to the stone of corrosive acid to make it look old before its time, and, second, the elaborate faking of a broken-but-later-mended look in hundreds of the small panes of the leaded casement windows which doubtless afford little enough light at best—as for those twin idiocies, the Drifter need not waste words in an attempt to express himself. And yet, though he would agree with all their strictures, the Drifter is inclined to think that he would be more amused than impressed by most of the undergraduates who utter them as they sit in the luxurious quarters Harkness affords. For he suspects that there is at least as much affectation in the attitude of the young men as there was among the high ones who decided that a New England factory city, twentieth century, furnished the proper setting in place and time for an attempt to revive that medieval hymn to God, the Gothic cathedral, whose massive stones are its least important part, are merely the instrument on which the hymn was played at Chartres, at Burgos, at Milan. In any case, the contempt of the students is not sufficient reason for a change in style, which at this late date could have only unfortunate results. At least let the planners resist such an impulse until the carping undergraduates refuse to bow their heads under the luxurious showers that flow in Harkness dormitories or scorn to do their stint of study in the comfortable chairs and divans of the new library. Let Yale, in other words, make the best of its grandeur.

* * * * *

MEANWHILE, the Drifter, while he still feels that Gothic and New Haven were never meant for each other, must at this time withdraw one of his objections, namely, that the Yale slant is un-American. Consider the tale of Yale in the past decade or so. First, the desire to

do something bigger and better than anyone had ever thought of doing before; then the importation of a medieval European product and the adaptation—some call it bastardization—of that product on such a scale that its shadow has completely obscured its former self; and finally the irreverent and complete contempt of the pampered young sons to whose benefit it was all directed. What could be more American? Come to think of it, what could possibly be more hilariously American than the transformation of a green-curtained confessional into that now-famous telephone booth in the Sterling Memorial Library?

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

False Art

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: There have been many admirable articles in the issues of your paper which have done much to keep me in contact with America—and contemporary thought generally—during a sojourn in Europe. I remember with especial pleasure Mr. Hal-dane's credo of last summer.

But I am writing to congratulate you especially on Yale's Cathedral Orgy, by William Harlan Hale. A friend (himself an architect, and an admirable artist and critic) had written me some time ago about an article by Mr. Hale in the *Harkness Hoot* as one of the signs of life in our country. Now your publication of this brilliant paper comes—to prove his contention up to the hilt. Defenders of the "orgy" might say that I should do better to see the building before agreeing with an attack on it. But the article makes one see it, especially as there are other such doleful things; and there are matters of architecture for which description is about 99 per cent sufficient. This is doubtless one—unless (as I think) the description is 100 per cent sufficient.

Paris, May 8

WALTER PACH

"Pure" Races

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: One of your correspondents in the issue of April 8 speaks of "the Turk, the Armenian, and the Jew, all of the Semitic race." What becomes of the hitherto accepted view that the Turks are of the Mongolian race and the Armenians of the Indo-European?

If your correspondent had been content with saying that a race whose history includes the practice of slavery, with much legitimization of slave women's children by their masters, cannot claim to be a pure race, the point would have been indisputable. For that matter, what race is pure? The late Professor Labberton, author of the Labberton's "Historical Atlas" of our school days, held that high musical genius never exists in a man who has not some admixture (commonly, of course, untraced) of Negro blood. Certainly nobody who springs from a nation through whose territory Hannibal's army passed, or from a nation whose warriors brought home servants or camp followers from the crusades, or from a nation whose people have intermarried with a nation of which either of these things is true, can claim a certainty that there was no Negro in his ancestry.

Ballard Vale, Mass., April 9

STEVEN T. BYINGTON

A Wasteful System

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Judging by various reports, if we do not recognize the Soviet Republics soon, we shall not be able to recognize them at all; they will be so different. While we try to make things work under the traditional and unconscious anarchist principle, and have neither a capitalist system nor a private-property system, they show definite indications of establishing a capitalistic private-property system, with all the people in the firm as a matter of course, all of them naturally and normally interested in getting their work well done, and as normally interested in seeing that every citizen is doing something useful and getting the net profit from his work to which he is entitled. Russia is getting ready to set up business as a nation.

I am a work veteran of fifty years' active service, plus the many weeks that your remarkable "system" excused me from being useful to the country in my best years. You will understand immediately that I was never permitted to acquire property in any substantial volume. I have to keep on working indefinitely, and there may be something for the eventual funeral. Multiply this case by the fifty millions now dragging out an existence, and you get the idea.

It is not that we are objects of charity to be helped on our own account—that is where so many of our best minds fall down. We are the working capital of the nation, inadequately used and tended or wholly wasted, at a cost to the nation of ten to fifty dollars a day each in production capacity. Add to the unemployed of our number two or three times as many who are employed wastefully or detrimentally, plus their incomes, and you get another idea.

Los Angeles, May 10

BEN ARTHUR

Student Strikes

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The strike "against all extra-curricular activities" at St. Lawrence University is, in spite of its being a rather silly gesture, not without some significance. It implies that the faculty, the administration, and the alumni think more of extra-curricular activities than do the students. In this day of drum-beating and whoop-la education this is not far from right, for it is by this means that a college becomes and remains known. It is all very well to smile at the childishness of such actions, but it seems to me that these students have inadvertently pronounced an anathema upon American universities.

Cornell, Wash., May 12

FRANK H. CASS

Cornell War Memorial

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: May I call attention to a slight omission in your brief paragraph on the Cornell war memorial—Hans Wagner episode. No mention whatever was made of the unenthusiastic reception of the plan by the Cornell *Daily Sun* and a goodly percentage of the less dormant student body. President Farrand, in all fairness to him, found it necessary to apologize for the blunder, and the students themselves are raising a fund of their own for Hans Wagner as a gentle reminder of the folly of 1914-18. There is yet hope within these college walls.

Ithaca, N. Y., May 16

THOMAS E. ELLIS

Summer Book Section

Ezra Pound's Golden Ass^{*}

By ALLEN TATE

I

and as for text we have taken it
from that of Messire Laurentius
and from a codex once of the Lords Malatesta . . .

ONE is not certain who Messire Laurentius was; one is not very certain that it makes no difference. Yet one takes comfort in the vast range of Mr. Pound's obscure learning, which no one man could be expected to know much about. In this great work one is continually uncertain, as to space, time, history. The codex of the Lords Malatesta would be less disconcerting than Laurentius—if we were sure it existed—for more than half of the thirty cantos contain long paraphrases or garbled quotations from the correspondence, public and private, of the Renaissance Italians, chiefly Florentine and Venetian. About a third of the lines are versified documents. Another third are classical allusions, esoteric quotations from the ancients, fragments of the Greek poets with bits of the Romans thrown in; all magnificently written into Mr. Pound's own text. The rest is contemporary—anecdotes, satirical pictures of vulgar Americans, obscene stories, evenings in low Mediterranean dives, and gossip about amazing rogues behind the scenes of European power. The three kinds of material in the cantos are antiquity, the Renaissance, and the modern world. They are combined on no principle that seems in the least consistent to a first glance. They appear to be mixed in an incoherent jumble, or to stand up in puzzling contrasts.

This is the poetry which, in early and incomplete editions, has had more influence on us than any other of our time; it has had an immense underground reputation. And deservedly. For even the early reader of Mr. Pound could not fail to detect the presence of a new poetic form in the individual cantos; though the full value and intention of this form appears for the first time in the complete work. It is not that there is any explicit feature of the whole design that is not contained in each canto; it is simply that Mr. Pound must be read in bulk; it is only then that the great variety of his style and the apparent incoherence turn into order and form. There is no other poetry like the "Cantos" in English. And there is none quite so simple in form. The form is, in fact, so simple that almost no one has guessed it, and I suppose it will continue to puzzle, perhaps to enrage, our more academic critics for a generation to come. But this form by virtue of its simplicity remains inviolable to critical terms: even now it cannot be technically described.

I begin to talk like Mr. Pound, or rather like the way in which most readers think Mr. Pound writes. The secret of his form is this: conversation. The cantos are talk, talk, talk; not by any one in particular to any one else in par-

ticular; they are just rambling talk. At least each canto is a cunningly devised imitation of a polite conversation, in which no one presses any subject very far. The length of breath, the span of conversational energy, is the length of canto. The conversationalist pauses; there is just enough left hanging in the air to give him a new start; so that the transitions between the cantos are natural and easy.

Each canto has the broken flow and the somewhat elusive climax of a good monologue: because there is no single speaker, it is a many-voiced monologue. That is the method of the poems—though there is another quality of the form that I must postpone for a moment—and *that is what the poems are about*.

There are, as I have said, three subjects of conversation—ancient times, Renaissance Italy, and the present—but these are not what the cantos are about. They are not about Italy, nor about Greece, nor are they about us. They are not about anything. But they are distinguished poetry. Mr. Pound himself tells us:

And they want to know what we talked about?

"de litteris et de armis, praestantibus ingeniis,

Both of ancient times and our own; books, arms,

And men of unusual genius

Both of ancient times and our own, in short the usual subjects

Of conversation between intelligent men."

II

There is nothing in the cantos more difficult than that. There is nothing inherently obscure; nothing too profound for any reader who has enough information to get to the background of all the allusions in a learned conversation. But there is something that no reader, short of some years of hard textual study, will understand. This is the very heart of the cantos, the secret of Mr. Pound's poetic character, which will only gradually emerge from a detailed analysis of every passage. And this is no more than our friends are constantly demanding of us; we hear them talk, and we return to hear them talk, and we return to hear them again, but we never know what they talk about; we return for that mysterious quality of charm that has no rational meaning that we can define. It is only after a long time that the order, the direction, the rhythm of the talker's mind, the logic of his character as distinguished from anything logical he may say—it is a long time before this begins to take on form for us. So with Mr. Pound's cantos. It is doubtless easier for us (who are trained in the more historic brands of poetry) when the poems are about God, Freedom, and Immortality, but there is no reason why poetry should not be so perplexingly simple as Mr. Pound's, and be about nothing at all.

The ostensible subjects of the cantos—ancient, middle, and modern times—are only the materials round which Mr. Pound's mind plays constantly; they are the screen upon

^{*} "A Draft of XXX Cantos." By Ezra Pound. Paris: The Hours Press. Edition of 212 copies.

which he throws a beautiful, flowing quality of poetic thought. Now in conversation the memorable quality is a sheer accident of character, and is not designed; but in the cantos the effect is deliberate, and from the first canto to the thirtieth the set tone is maintained without a single lapse.

It is this tone, it is this quality quite simply, which is the meaning of the cantos, and although, as I have said, it is simple and direct, it is just as hard to pin down, it is as hidden in its shifting details, as a running, ever-changing conversation. It cannot be taken out of the text; and yet the special way that Mr. Pound has of weaving his three materials together, of emphasizing them, of comparing and contrasting them, gives us a clue to the leading intention of the poems. I come to that quality of the form which I postponed.

The easiest interpretation of all poetry is the symbolic method: there are few poems that cannot be paraphrased into a kind of symbolism, which is usually false, being by no means the chief intention of the poet. It is very probable, therefore, that I am about to falsify the true simplicity of the cantos into a simplicity that is merely convenient and spurious. The reader must bear this in mind, and view the slender symbolism that I am going to read into the cantos as a critical shorthand, useful perhaps, but which when used must be dropped.

One of the finest cantos is properly the first. It describes a voyage:

And then went down to the ship,
Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and
We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,
Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
Heavy with weeping, and winds from sternward
Bore us out onward with bellying canvas,
Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.

They land, having come "to the place aforesaid by Circe"—whatever place it may be—and Tiresias appears, who says:

"Odysseus

Shalt return through spiteful Neptune, over dark seas,
Lose all companions." And then Anticlea came.
Lie quiet Divus. I mean, that is, Andreas Divus,
In officina Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer.
And he sailed, by Sirens and thence outward and away
And unto Circe.

Mr. Pound's world is the scene of a great Odyssey, and everywhere he lands it is the shore of Circe, where men "lose all companions" and are turned into swine. It would not do at all to push this hint too far, but I will risk one further point: Mr. Pound is a typically modern, rootless, and internationalized intelligence. In the place of the traditional supernaturalism of the older and local cultures, he has a cosmopolitan curiosity which seeks out marvels, which are all equally marvelous, whether it be a Greek myth or the antics in Europe of a lady from Kansas. He has the bright, cosmopolitan savoir faire which refuses to be "taken in": he will not believe, being a traditionalist at bottom, that the "perverts, who have set money-lust before the pleasures of the senses," are better than swine. And ironically, being modern and a hater of modernity, he sees all history as deformed by the trim-coifed goddess.

The cantos are a book of marvels—marvels that he has read about, or heard of, or seen; there are Greek myths, tales of Italian feuds, meetings with strange people, rumors

of intrigues of state, memories of remarkable dead friends like T. E. Hulme, comments on philosophical problems, harangues on abuses of the age; the "usual subjects of conversation between intelligent men."

It is all fragmentary. Now nearly every canto begins with a bit of heroic antiquity, some myth, or classical quotation, or a lovely piece of lyrical description in a grand style. It invariably breaks down. It trails off into a piece of contemporary satire, or a flat narrative of the rascality of some Italian prince. This is the special quality of Mr. Pound's form, the essence of his talk, the direction of these magnificent conversations.

For not once does Mr. Pound give himself up to any single story or myth. The thin symbolism from the Circe myth is hardly more than a leading tone, an unconscious prejudice about men which he is not willing to indicate beyond the barest outline. He cannot believe in any of them, not even in his own power of imagining them out to a conclusion. None of his myths is compelling enough to draw out his total intellectual resources; none goes far enough to become a belief or even a momentary faith. They remain marvels to be looked at, but they are meaningless, the wrecks of civilization. His powerful juxtapositions of the ancient, the Renaissance, and the modern worlds reduce all three elements to an unhistorical miscellany, timeless and without origin, and no longer a force in the lives of men.

III

And that is the peculiarly modern quality of Mr. Pound. There is a certain likeness in this to another book of marvels, those stories of late antiquity known to us as "The Golden Ass." The cantos are a sort of "Golden Ass." There is a likeness, but there is no parallel beyond the mere historical one: both books are the production of worlds without convictions and given over to a hard secular program. Here the similarity ends. For Mr. Pound is a powerful reactionary, a faithful mind devoted to those ages when the myths were not merely pretty, but true. And there is a cloud of melancholy irony hanging over the cantos. He is persuaded that the myths are only beautiful, and he drops them after a glimpse, but he is not reconciled to this aestheticism: he ironically puts the myths against the ugly specimens of modern life that have defeated them. But neither are the specimens of modernity worthy of the dignity of belief:

She held that a sonnet was a sonnet
And ought never to be destroyed
And had taken a number of courses
And continued with hope of degrees and
Ended in a Baptist learnery

Somewhere near the Rio Grande.

I am not certain that Mr. Pound will agree with me that he is a traditionalist; nor am I convinced that Mr. Pound, for his part, is certain of anything under heaven but his genius for poetry. He is probably one of two or three living Americans who will be remembered as poets of the first order. Yet there is no reason to infer from that that Mr. Pound, outside his craft, or outside his conversation, knows in the least what he is doing or saying. He is and always has been in a muddle of revolution; and for some appalling reason he identifies his crusade with liberty—liberty of speech, liberty of press, liberty of conduct—in short,

liberty. I do not mean to say that either Mr. Pound or his critic knows what liberty is. Nevertheless, Mr. Pound identifies it with civilization and intelligence, of the modern and scientific variety. And yet the ancient cultures, which he so much admires, were, from any modern viewpoint, hatched in barbarism and superstition. One is entitled to the suspicion that Mr. Pound prefers barbarism, and that by taking up the role of revolution against it he has bitten off his nose to spite his face. He is the confirmed enemy of provincialism, never suspecting that his favorite, Lorenzo the Magnificent, for example, was provincial to the roots of his hair.

This muddle runs through the cantos, and it makes the irony that I have spoken of to a certain extent unconscious. For as the apostle of humane culture, he constantly discredits it by crying up a rationalistic enlightenment. It would appear from this that his philosophical tact is somewhat feminine, and that, as intelligence, it does not exist. His poetic intelligence is of the finest: and if he doesn't know what liberty is, he understands poetry, and how to write it. This is enough for one man to know. And the thirty cantos are enough to occupy a loving and ceaseless study—say a canto a year for thirty years, all thirty to be read every few weeks just for the tone.

The Novel from James to Joyce

By JOSEPH WARREN BEACH

STUART GILBERT'S masterly program notes on "Ulysses" invite one to reconsider the place of this book in the evolution of novelistic technique. For purposes of orientation there is no work more helpful than that of Henry James, if we have in mind the wide prevalence of his ideal even yet, the radical divergence of Joyce, and, at the same time, their striking similarity in several important points. James represents the extreme limit of tendencies which, for brevity, we may call dramatic. The prime advantage of the play over the novel is that everything takes place before the spectator's eyes in the immediate present. The "dramatic" novel strives to capture the appeal of the play by eliminating so far as possible the elements of exposition and summary narrative, and exploiting the "scene," or, as James calls it, the "discriminated occasion." It is an effort to keep perpetually within the dramatic present. Few people realize—and least of all Henry James—how much of the power of Dostoevski derives from his approximation to this ideal. The action of his novels is concentrated within a few days' time; an extraordinary number of pages is devoted to each day's performance; transitional passages are reduced to a vanishing minimum. Dostoevski seems not to have consciously sighted James's ideal of the restricted viewpoint; but his instinct led him to confine himself practically to the view of a single character over, sometimes, hundreds of pages.

The restricted viewpoint is, as Mr. Lubbock has shown, the final means of "dramatizing" the action of the novel. The ideal of the dramatic novel is immediacy, and the restricted viewpoint subserves immediacy, for one thing, by getting rid of the intrusions of an officious author. Instead of the chronicle of an outsider, we follow the action in the spotlight of someone's consciousness within the story. It is true that what we have now is subjective drama, which may be thought a contradiction in terms, since the drama of the stage is confined to speech and action. In subjective drama speech and action come to us strained through the medium of someone's thoughts. And so the novel, pursuing its "dramatic" ideal, has reached in James a technique as far removed as possible from that of the stage. And the very cult of the "discriminated occasion" leads to an expansion of the moment-in-the-mind altogether untheatrical, which proves for most readers a monstrous and intolerable excess-

cence upon the story. So that, in point of fact, it is only in the disciples of James—in Edith Wharton, in Joseph Hergesheimer, in Anne Douglas Sedgwick—it is in the attenuated form of "The Age of Innocence" that most readers actually relish the method of Henry James.

Meantime the cognoscenti continue to taste in quiet the thick and heady vintage of the master, and new schools of esoteric fiction take their departure from him. What characterizes him most, in his later work, is this *infinite expansion of the moment*, and it is this, as much as any other feature, which characterizes Joyce in "Ulysses." For Joyce is concerned very little with action, and very much with what goes on in the consciousness of Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom. And it is not to explain their action that he displays their souls; it is their souls themselves that interest him—or rather the flux of sensation and thought that constitutes the identity of each. A new psychology has intervened between James and Joyce, and it is no longer possible to talk of souls. The people of James are unitary beings, responsible for their choices and judged by the fineness of their perceptions. The plot of the story is the process of their enlightenment proceeding inevitably to their choice of the better alternative. For in James, even in his later work, there is still a plot. It is a plot greatly reduced and strictly confined to some narrow spiritual issue. But this issue, which limits the plot, defines it and makes it a plot. In Joyce there is no plot, but simply a series of everyday occurrences serving as a framework on which to hang the psychical fabric whose texture it is our pleasure to study. The subjective "close-ups" of James are meant to have their bearing on the issue and are limited, in the long run, by this intention. In Joyce there is nothing of this kind to limit the close-ups. So that what first sharply distinguishes him from James is simply his carrying so very much farther one of James's leading tendencies.

The same thing applies to the author's disposition to self-effacement. In the later novels of James he tries to identify himself as completely as possible with one or another of the characters. Only he feels that he should be there to render, to interpret, the character's view. And it is ever the style of Henry James—his manner of putting ideas together, his stately and finicking process of thought—which dominates the landscape. This is necessary, he thinks, to guarantee the

coherence of his character's experience. But coherence is not what Joyce is concerned with. It is, on the contrary, what will seem to the hasty reader the very height of incoherence. The *monologue intérieur*, which occupies the bulk of this volume and is the feature most frequently imitated, seems devised to illustrate the freakishness and inconsequence of the subjective process when not strictly controlled by some practical objective. One idea leads to another by associations that shoot off at a tangent; one stream of thought is overlaid and undermined by any number of diverse streams, which are sure to seep through the roof or well up from beneath and distract its flow just at the point where it seems to be getting somewhere. The psyche which is defined by the continuity of this welter appears to be passive under the compulsion of eye and ear continually flooding it with new associations, and still more under that of memory and imagination. And what doubles the confusion is the unwillingness of the author to show us the way, even to indicate the point and plausibility of hiatus and ellipsis. The silent monologue is for the most part carried on in the very idiom of the character, with whatever there is of idiosyncrasy in the way his thoughts follow one another. Once again, in applying James's idea, Joyce has developed the formula to the point where it is unrecognizable.

Plot having gone by the board, and with it the psychical coherence of the characters, what is left to hold together this great amorphous mass and give it form? It is here that the recent scholarly elucidations of Mr. Gilbert are indispensable. He has shown that Joyce has a principle of organization as formal as it is unique in fiction. "Ulysses" is nothing more nor less than a symphonic poem, characterized by a rigorous and insistent development of themes. Underneath the apparently freakish play of the surface runs the continuous rhythm of recurring motifs. First of all there is the close correspondence of each of the eighteen sections with one of the episodes of the "Odyssey." This correspondence is not merely a matter of the general outline of the episode, but is carried out in a thousand obscure allusions scattered through the narrative and lodged like ore in the most secret rifts and veins of rhetoric and reverie. Along with this is the thematic development in each episode of allusions to some bodily organ, to some one of the arts, some type-word or symbol, often to some color, together with the application in each case of a special narrative technique appropriate to the subject matter. For example, the scene in the newspaper office, corresponding, with humorous exactness, to the Homeric episode of Aeolus and his windbag, develops with infinite ingenuity the theme of the lungs, that windy organ of rhetoric; it offers examples of every trick known to the Greek rhetoricians (Mr. Gilbert cites ninety-five of them); and its special technique is the enthymeme, consisting of a syllogism with one premise omitted. Besides all this, there are other leit-motifs recurrent throughout the whole book, such as the mystic doctrine of metempsychosis; the theme of paternity, biological and spiritual; the preoccupations of theology and Aristotelian metaphysics; certain anthropological themes; and of course the psychological motifs of inferiority and compensation, with a dozen related notions from Zurich and Vienna.

Now what most needs saying, in reference to all these motifs and correspondences, is that they are not used for the development of plot, nor are they, for the most part, neces-

sary to the motivation of character. So far as fiction goes, they are a pure luxury—the unbridled play of the poetic or musical faculty. It should also be noted that they are the element in "Ulysses" (and what I am now saying applies still more forcibly to "Work in Progress") which has least affected such novelists as have more or less come under Joyce's influence—Virginia Woolf, Conrad Aiken, John Dos Passos, Rex Stout, William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, Nathan Asch. (Dorothy Richardson and Waldo Frank should probably be regarded as autonomous, showing contemporaneously some of the same tendencies.) More than anything else it is his technique of the silent monologue which has influenced the "stream-of-consciousness" writers. The "polyphonic" method of Aldous Huxley does not deal appreciably in the kind of themes affected by Joyce, though I presume that both he and Dos Passos have been influenced by the episode of the Wandering Rocks. The character itself—or the character's philosophy—is the theme in Huxley. Dos Passos more nearly suggests Joyce's use of themes which are symbols, that is, something superadded to the realism of character portrayal. And in the introductory prose poems of "Manhattan Transfer," the "camera eye" and the "newsreels" of "The 42nd Parallel," he makes the most effective use, of any of the school, of that poetic symbolism which is the inimitable feature of "Ulysses." It is indeed highly significant that this aspect of Joyce is most nearly reflected in the compositions not of novelists but of poets, writers like T. S. Eliot and Hart Crane.

There has been a deal of talk about Joyce's realism. It is true that he is a realist if that means that he has no sentimental or moral ax to grind, or if realism signifies the formidable assemblage of lifelike detail. But what is much more to the point is that he is in the line of the symbolists, as Edmund Wilson has shown in his subtle and learned book entitled "Axel's Castle." Another way of placing him would be by the analogy of post-impressionist painting. The technique of James might be likened to that of painting before the advent of impressionism. His aim is truth in the representation of nature. Truth is the whole burden of his literary criticism. A very special truth he seeks, truth selected and set in a particular light. That is where the art comes in. But still he is the painter sitting down before a landscape to render it with faithfulness. Now this is the attitude of the impressionist as well as of his predecessors. Only the impressionist saw his landscape differently. He saw it less in terms of the outline which is known to be there and more in terms of the mass which strikes the eye, and his technique was to build up an impression of the mass by laying on spots of color. James is a pre-impressionist in the novel by virtue of the precision with which his issue is defined by the tight little line of his plot. D. H. Lawrence, in poetry and the novel, is an impressionist because he is not concerned with the dramatic shape of the thing but with the living "feel" of it. When Miriam in "Sons and Lovers" asks Paul why it is that she likes so much one of his sketches, he replies, "It's more shimmery, as if I'd painted the shimmering protoplasm in the leaves and everywhere, and not the stiffness of the shape. . . . Only this shimmeriness is the real living. The shape is a dead crust." Ford tells us that Conrad and he were called impressionists because they did not "narrate" their stories, but let them build themselves up bit by bit in the casual manner of life. "We saw that life

did not narrate, but made impressions on our brains." The peculiarities of Conrad's technique—his curious chronology, his Captain Marlow, and the rest—were all in the interest of his impressionist ideal, "to make you see."

But the post-impressionist is not primarily concerned with the representation of nature. His aim is, out of elements derived from nature, to make an abstract composition for rendering some truth of his own conceiving. His truth may be of the utmost significance in the ideal world, but it is not necessarily a fact of nature. And he permits himself every license in the treatment of facts. It is clear that Joyce's "Ulysses"—not to mention the still more symbolistic "Work in Progress"—corresponds in fiction to post-impressionism in painting. His unrealistic freedom in handling facts is illustrated—to cite two instances—by the "gigantism" of the Cyclops episode and the Freudian mythology of the Circe episode. It shows itself everywhere in the transcendental play of his fancy around the manifold interwoven symbols. But this, as I have pointed out, is the note in Joyce which has had the fewest echoes among writers of fiction. And it raises the question whether he should properly be classified as a novelist. He has vastly influenced the technique of the novel. But he has perhaps more affinities with Aristophanes than with Thackeray, more with Dante than with Henry James.

Sic Semper

By LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Down—down he came,
Burning his soul with the exploring flame.

Kingship among the angels lost, honor in Heaven forsaking
For earth's awaking.

He, the Light-Bringer, Fire-Scatterer, plunging through
death in the dark
With his one spark

Torn from the bright
Heart of Intelligence whose least universe is Light,

So that the clod
Might lift itself, light-shielded and light-shod,
And man grow like his God. . . .

A snare
Of winds tore the bare hands and throat, froze the fine hair,
Whipped him with knives of air.

But down—down he flew,
Nor rested till the burning seeds were planted and the dark
mind knew
Wisdom defining one and two,
False from true.

Then man—aware too well
What truth would cost, what love and wisdom would
compel—
Put Lucifer in hell.

Books

Salvation for the Modern Soul

The Contemporary and His Soul. By Irwin Edman. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith. \$2.50.

IN the foreword to that singularly acute and disturbing book "The Modern Temper," Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch confessed that the mood he was describing was perhaps no more than one of many modern tempers. His description, further, was surely not an unbiased one, for it was obvious that Mr. Krutch shared the mood he was describing, and that his description of it was, in effect, an argument for it. It has remained for Mr. Irwin Edman to present us with a comprehensive if less sympathetic description of nearly all of the leading modern tempers.

He begins with the mood described by Mr. Krutch, which he calls the Cult of Disillusion. I find the chapter devoted to this one of the least satisfactory sections of his book, for it seems neither adequate as an analysis nor fully convincing as an answer, though it does make one or two telling points. Mr. Krutch, Mr. Edman believes, is for one thing guilty of "the fallacy of origins"—in assuming, for example, that because poetic love still has lust as its source it therefore ceases to be poetry or love. Further, the Krutchian view of nature as something essentially alien, hostile, or absurd Mr. Edman dismisses as largely an echo of the sentimental view fashionable in the late nineteenth century. Nature is not alien to us, for we are a part of it; it is "the matrix and material of all our ideals and the locus of all possible destinies." The cult of disillusion, again, is in large part a reflection of the aimlessness and loose ends of the post-war generation, and to the extent that it is so it is unlikely to be permanent. Finally, the "failure of nerve" in our time, in so far as it is real and not merely verbal (for Mr. Edman hints that much of it is merely a pose by those who wish to appear smart and sophisticated), follows in part from the fact that we live in cities and among words; and though only an "unprecedented social transformation" may be able to cure this, Mr. Edman meanwhile offers some old-fashioned advice to disillusionists on animal satisfactions, shared domestic joys, and the delight in some activity for its own sake.

I have said that Mr. Edman is describing various modern tempers; perhaps I should rather have said that he is describing various modern proposals for the salvation of the soul. The terms have gone out of style, and much of their ancient meaning has faded, but what the contemporary is seeking today, Mr. Edman feels, is what man has always been seeking, peace and contentment for his spirit. The disillusionist tells him that these are not to be had, or rather that they can be secured only by an almost complete renunciation of hope; but meanwhile other faiths offer him something more positive. The most important of these, perhaps, is the Faith in Intelligence. Some rudimentary reliance on intelligence has, of course, existed since the dawn of consciousness, and at least as far back as Plato philosophers were convinced that intelligence could devise a radically better world, but with the Greeks mind was still primarily a faculty of vision, an end in itself; it was Francis Bacon who first popularized the conception of it as an instrument for bettering man's estate, and the conception of logic as primarily a technique of discovery. Such writers as H. G. Wells and John Dewey today are the modern heirs of Bacon; it is they who have aroused the hope that the methods which have succeeded so miraculously in the world of material things will succeed equally in the field of human nature and social institutions. But with all the parade of statistics and termi-

nology, the progress in genuine social "science" has been negligible, and even the faith in the miracle of a new education has been dying. The naive assumption that mastery of things—resulting in comfort, luxuries, remarkable inventions, and quick communication—could produce individual and universal happiness, has been discredited. Further, to see the good is not to do it; mere intelligence will not save the soul. And "it is no use insisting to the disenchanted that the only avenues to progress are through science and the machine, if it is precisely the quality and character of an industrial and mechanical civilization that leaves the devotee cold."

Mr. Edman turns next to those who have retreated to a form of Platonism, of which Santayana, with his contemplation of the infinite realm of timeless essences, is the chief living representative. But while it may be well to withdraw and see things, however anguished, tempting, or exciting, as mere examples of eternity, that withdrawal, Mr. Edman points out, is a withdrawal and can be little more than a momentary soliloquy. A like fate must fall upon those who turn back nostalgically to some time in the past. This is merely another form of Platonism, for the past toward which such persons turn is a Platonic hypostasis. "It is myth using the language of history, the imagination trying to give its fantasies the glamor and authority of once having been." So the romantic neo-classicists of the eighteenth century discovered—or contrived—"the white serenity of Greece," and romantic classicists today sigh for the imagined rationality and urbanity of the eighteenth century, "a world composed exclusively of the mind of Voltaire, the music of Mozart, and the *fêtes champêtres* of Watteau." T. S. Eliot, yearning for a fixed authority, and with the courage to follow the logic of his own position, has seen that to be a classicist in literature involves being a conservative in politics and adopting an authoritative religion, which for him means Anglo-Catholicism. But any effort to return to the past, as, for example, by erecting a Gothic church on Fifth Avenue, results only in retrieving a faked shell, not the authentic substance of a vanished epoch. A faith in the past is not really a way out of the confusion of the present; for the present is always with us.

It is in his chapter on Flights to Action and to Ecstasy, it seems to me, that Mr. Edman makes his most brilliant criticism. Here he examines the cults of the sexualists, the aesthetes, and the "activists." The last group range all the way from those who make a fetish of high-pressure business to the Hemingway character, who only *does* and *is*, says nothing but the barely and bleakly necessary, and despises all subtleties of thought and emotion. Most of Mr. Edman's attention in this chapter, however, is devoted to the "phallic fanaticism" of D. H. Lawrence and his followers. He disposes effectively, to my mind, of the cult of sex as salvation, though not before pointing out that the chief leaders of that cult are not mere carnal priests, but mystics with a long tradition behind them, who see in the act of sex not merely physical satisfaction but mystical regeneration. Like other mystical poets "they are sustained by the rhetoric of their own eloquence rather than by the facts, as it is indeed their own eloquence and art that chiefly come to interest them." The new sex lyricist has the dual aim of wishing to be a sturdy, true child of nature and a poet appreciating the sturdy child of nature. He is the victim of an old and naive mistake—that of selecting one phase of life and identifying it with saving glory, of regarding only one of his many organs, impulses, interests, and enterprises as *the* instrument of salvation.

When Mr. Edman comes to his concluding chapter, Note Concerning Salvation for This World, he is much less convincing. For here he attempts to be constructive, almost to wish to repair the damage he has just done; so much so that he even appears to accept much that he has already rejected. The ap-

parent inconsistency, on closer examination, is not as great as it at first seems, for while here Mr. Edman seems to be recommending intelligence, sexual love, contemplation, action, tradition, where he had previously seemed to reject them, he had rejected them merely as isolated panaceas, each selected at the expense of the rest, and not as elements that might be made part of a full, harmonious life. But if the inconsistency of doctrine is perhaps negligible, the inconsistency of tone is surely not. Mr. Edman begins his final chapter hesitantly, and seems to promise little enough: "One thing, at least, a centering of the quest for salvation upon this life and in terms of this world can accomplish: to avert the disappointment of romantic hopes unfulfilled." But before many pages we find him writing: "It is a challenge, not an elegy, that should be the theme of our discourse, not the violins on a dying fall, but the trumpet call." Here Mr. Edman seems to me to become a victim of the will-to-eloquence that he criticizes in others, for there is nothing in his previous analysis, at times so mordantly realistic, to lead us to feel that way. He has suggested, at best, that the chief sources of happiness—which imply also the chief sources of misery and hopelessness—are what they have always been. This may be consolatory to the victims of an illogical pessimism and despair, but it hardly seems anything to blow a trumpet about.

HENRY HAZLITT

Stalin

Stalin. By Isaac Don Levine. Cosmopolitan Book Corporation. \$3.50.

HERE is a book that should be divided by five. In his reference to Stalin's struggle for power the author speaks of a "world that had been inured to mistruth but educated in sensation, a world that had lost its sense of indignation but gained a jazz and cinematographic perspective." Such a world he himself must have had in mind in the preparation of this volume. The work is highly jazzed from beginning to end.

The author's first difficulty seems to be mathematical in nature. He loves good round figures. In describing the land of the Soviets he says: "Here a million wooden villages have produced a score of brick and stone cities." According to the census of December, 1926, there were but 387,000 villages in the union. And *wooden* villages are entirely absent in the vast timberless regions of the south. In another passage he reports that at the close of 1930 "the gold ruble had depreciated so that on the 'black bourse' the dollar fetched forty rubles instead of the two paid by the state." Of course the *gold* ruble had not depreciated at all; it had merely been driven out of circulation. And the paper ruble certainly brought more than two and a half cents on the "black bourse." The most that émigrés, desiring to send money through subterranean channels to friends and relatives in Russia, can get for a dollar in the branches of this exchange in Paris and Berlin is eight or ten rubles. Again he refers to "the tens of thousands of closed churches that went with the Communist drive [in 1930]." According to the best information available there were not more than 50,000 churches in the entire union in February, 1930. Moreover, from 1917 up to that time only about 3,000 had been closed.

Mr. Levine's second difficulty is a language difficulty. He seems to be subject to a form of verbal intoxication. He is unable to resist the temptation of strong words. Thus he begins his first chapter with "The Land of Courage . . . The Land of Fear . . . The Caucasus"; and his second with "The Land of Faith . . . The Land of Despair . . . Eurasia." Then on the next page he gives the following characterization of Eurasia: "A land where the machine is a faith and faith is a

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machine; where politics is despair and despair is politics—this is the cradle of bolshevism." Now all of this sounds very good. But what does it mean? In describing the situation in 1927 he writes:

Fear, the soul of dictatorship, now strode across the land. . . . Looking back upon the nightmarish utterances of Stalin and Trotzky and their followers in those days, it is impossible to escape the vision of a divided band of conspirators petrified at the sight of their own ghost—the ghost of bolshevism, the ghost of Leninism, the ghost of terror.

The book is well sprinkled with such phrases as "the vivisection of 160,000,000 people," "the bloodless guillotine," "the panic in the Kremlin," "a frenzied dumping." The Five-Year Plan he disposes of far more easily than do the chancelleries of Europe and the leaders of capitalistic economics:

Conceived in distress, propelled by panic, fed on false promises, driven by emotional and not rational means, the Five-Year Plan in the hands of the Stalin dictatorship is like a rocket proceeding to the moon, with the aid of charts prepared by a group of astronomers.

This may have been intended for drama, but in reality it is melodrama. At least it bears no relationship to the social sciences.

The author also seems to be suffering from a Eurasia complex. He attributes everything associated with the revolution that he does not like to the strange and baleful influence of Eurasia—cruelty, terror, dictatorship. As if Western Europe had never known, and may not again know, these forms of behavior! With this formula he easily explains the short duration of the red regime in Finland: "But then Finland is a European nation. And bolshevism has never been able to maintain a foothold in the West." Yet the author of this formula says of Stalin:

In a cosmic [*sic!*] world that does not conform to a single formula, Stalin is lost. He cannot find his bearings in a world developed beyond the perceptions of elementary Eurasia, a world bewildering in the variety of its living colors, a world in which the warm, deep currents of a flowering individualist culture are intertwined with the civilization of a machine age in a manner that defies rudimentary generalization.

That Stalin himself ever placed confidence in so simple a formula is highly doubtful.

The author's treatment of his subject, however, possesses many merits. He gives us a fairly sound picture of the career of Joseph Djughashvili. He also includes in the account many excellent quotations from the Soviet leader's speeches and writings. And the following estimate is admirable:

Stalin's principles and prerequisites of leadership are: organizing and executive ability, an unostentatious and plebeian conduct, foresight, unflinching courage of one's convictions, a never-aging spirit of rebellion, faith in the masses, anticipating their moods and wishes, and learning from them as well as their enemies.

Such lucid statements, however, are marred by the author's love of colorful phrases and his constant appeal to the gallery. He says in a number of places that Stalin possesses no originality, no power to formulate policies. Yet as early as 1917, when Lenin was pinning his hopes on a world upheaval, Stalin argued that the revolution might succeed in one country, and even in a culturally and technically backward country like Russia. A man capable of taking such a position at such a time cannot be said to lack independence and creative power. Certainly Stalin's mind is not to be compared with that of Trotzky in fertility and agility. At the same time history may well prove that on the most fundamental issues he was a safer guide than his more talented opponent.

This book will probably be widely read: partly because it is interesting, partly because its explanations are simple, and partly because its main theses are in harmony with the prejudices which commonly prevail in the United States. It will serve to perpetuate that misunderstanding which is our heritage from the first years of the Russian Revolution, when American and European journalism descended, whether by intent or incompetence, to the level of gross and detailed misrepresentation. The well-informed mind can read the volume with profit, being capable of detecting the exaggerations and moderating the tone of the adjectives. But to the ordinary reader it is likely to bring but little illumination. Stalin and the Russian experiment will remain about as inexplicable as ever. This is unfortunate, because Mr. Levine is unusually well equipped to report what happens in the Soviet Union. In the present work he has not lived up to his possibilities.

GEORGE S. COUNTS

"Mother India's" Sequel

Volume Two. By Katherine Mayo. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.

THE resolving note of Miss Mayo's "Mother India" (1926) was an essential depravity of the Indian people, especially the Hindus, that operated primarily in sex life and was the basis of all India's woes. Expressed with vehemence and passion, the thesis aroused in America and England spirited partisanship for or against India, and in India itself violent rebuttal and recrimination. In the years since the publication of that book the mass of evidence and opinion accumulated to discredit Miss Mayo's methods and conclusions has been so great as to subject her literary reputation to the severest doubt. The few defenders she has found have not succeeded in confirming her position, and they have lacked her fire. Now she comes to her own defense, using material fortuitously provided by the Indians themselves.

A little more than a year ago the Government of India's Age-of-Consent Committee published the report of its investigation into child marriage and the evidence on which that report was based. Following this report a Child-Marriage-Restraint Act was enacted by the Indian Legislative Assembly, fixing the marriage age for males at eighteen years and for females at fourteen. This was approved by the Governor General and became effective April 1, 1930. Out of the evidence collected by these Indians—evidence exploited by them to influence the Legislative Assembly—she has taken the bulk of the material for her book. Unwilling to concede the great achievement represented by this legislation, she somewhat speciously justifies the writing of this volume of self-defense on the ground that the punishment provided by the act for infringements is not sufficiently severe to be effective.

"Mother India"—prejudiced, ill-informed, and inaccurate as it was—nevertheless served a purpose in arousing public opinion in India on social questions. It gave an impetus to the labors of reformers that had already extended over many years, and aided their causes. But with that book Miss Mayo's contribution to India's progress ceased. She can do no more to stimulate public opinion there, and this new volume is of no importance.

To say that "Volume Two" has the same sort of faults as had "Mother India" is to surprise no one; but there is a difference in degree; for this new book is made up largely of Hindus' utterances. Yet the commentary she attaches to these quotations is often inaccurate and given a tone by prejudicial adjectives and interpretation, is animated by an obvious dislike of the Hindu religion and Hindus and a counter-leaning toward

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Christianity and its missionaries, and is filled with contempt for India's nationalists who make assertion against the British domination. With her reputation what it is in consequence of "Mother India," such further evidence of bias must destroy much of the credence she might otherwise have got from the general reader.

W. NORMAN BROWN

The First Days of Pompeii

Bulwer: A Panorama. I. Edward and Rosina, 1803-1836. By Michael Sadleir. Little, Brown and Company. \$4.

EVEN for so stogy a career as Bulwer-Lytton's, "panorama" is superficial. Mr. Sadleir's book is a deep and sharp analysis of the man, his associates, and his times. I know of no other single volume which gives so much information so clearly arranged about English literature, manners, customs, politics, in the first third of the nineteenth century. Mr. Sadleir makes legitimate use of the essential skill of the novelist—perception of character, narrative continuity, sense of the dramatic—yet he never comes within dangerous vicinity of that dreadful mongrel, fictionized biography. His substance is a scholar's examination of fact, evidence, document; his interpretation is imaginative in the right way, an illumination and vivification of the material, penetrating and subtle suggestion controlled by good sense and reason. A second volume is announced as in preparation, to deal with the thirties and forties; these dates imply a third and perhaps a fourth volume. No casual reader of Victorian biography and no special student can afford to miss the complete survey. And at least one reader waits eagerly for the whole work.

Bulwer-Lytton is himself a romantic hero more interesting than any hero whom he contrived in fiction, and even in his most objective novels his heroes were usually some form of himself at once diluted and strengthened. His life, brilliant in politics and blazingly successful in letters, was outwardly all that an ambitious man could hope for. Yet inwardly he was stricken with a sense of failure and defeat, he was unhappy, embittered, tormented. The external reason is his unbalanced wife, pitifully unsuited to him; the internal reason is his shy, proud, egotistic nature, self-conscious to the point of morbidity. Never did a man of genuine talent and apparent good fortune and opportunity come so near to starving spiritually in the midst of plenty. It is a pathetic, not quite laughable tragi-comedy, and Mr. Sadleir has made the most of it. One sentence, in Mr. Sadleir's italics, is the pass-key to the many chambers of Bulwer-Lytton's elaborate and fantastic house of life: "*Bulwer throughout his life was an intellect betrayed by character.*"

Behind this character Mr. Sadleir has spread the scene in which it flourished and in which it suffered. Here are the bigwigs, including Thackeray, at this time young and, even later, not always so big as an admirer wishes he had been. And the smaller people, many of them almost forgotten except as footnotes to more important personages, are fitted into their places. Most instructive is the parallel, which Mr. Sadleir does not force too closely, between the years following the Napoleonic era and our present post-war period. Smartness, cynicism, idealism, economic confusion, frivolity, despair, extravagance, and sober anxiety—we can understand the mess of a hundred years ago by regarding our own bewilderment.

A writer's character and experiences cannot be divorced from his work, and it is the business of biography to examine and reveal the relations. Yet, after all, what remains is so many books. What now remains of Bulwer-Lytton's abundant production, the fruit of industry and fertility which continued for fifty years? Probably most readers who have browsed

more or less widely among the novels of the world have read "The Last Days of Pompeii," and perhaps one or two others. Mr. Sadleir, who has a sound, fresh critical mind and is not misled into excess of enthusiasm by the biographer's zeal for his subject, thinks that Bulwer-Lytton is now undeservedly neglected, that there is much more in him than many of us realize. It is a fact of literary history that "more of Bulwer's books [were] published between 1830 and 1870, both in English and in translation, than those of any of his contemporaries." In his youthful triumph he succeeded Scott and preceded by a few years Dickens and Thackeray ("Eugene Aram," 1832; "The Last Days of Pompeii," 1834; "Pickwick Papers," 1836-37; "Vanity Fair," 1847). And he held his own in popularity against his greater rivals, to Thackeray's expressed and rather petty annoyance, but not, apparently, to the disturbance of the amiable and self-confident Dickens. At the start Bulwer-Lytton outdistanced his immediate competitors, who are in the handbooks of literature but are no longer read, and he was not supplanted by the younger men of genius who from our point of view throw him into a worthy second place. He was enterprising and experimental and he had an uncanny sense of what was about to be popular, what the people wanted. He tried everything and was practically successful in all modes—in the fashionable ("silver-spoon"), in the Gothic, in crime, mystery, and terror, in historical romance, in tales of classical antiquity, in stage plays (three successful), in political and literary essays. Though he was diffuse, digressive, grandiloquent, affected, he was a man of superior intellect, and he had high standards of good craftsmanship for himself and for others. Saintsbury to the contrary, he did "take pains," studied seriously in preparation for his historical novels, exerted to the utmost what powers he had. The great Victorian masters tower above him but they do not obliterate him from the landscape.

JOHN MACY

The Scorpion

Lockhart's Literary Criticism. Selected by M. Clive Hildyard. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 6s.

IN some ways this is a disappointing book, but perhaps the fault is Lockhart's rather than Miss Hildyard's. The Scotch Reviewers have a terrific reputation, thanks to the common idea that they killed poor John Keats; and apart from this legend, anyone interested in the literature of the period cannot help being aware of the effectiveness of periodical criticism in those days. It was a literary dictatorship such as had never existed before, and such as we have never seen since. But curiously little of that criticism has become literature; we do not now read the essays and reviews of Jeffrey and Francis Horner, of "Christopher North" and Sydney Smith, of Croker and Lockhart, as we read the comparable writings (comparable in their origin and occasion) of Johnson and Hazlitt, of Walter Bagehot and Matthew Arnold. The suspicion lingers that we are doing such men an injustice, and therefore a book like Miss Hildyard's, which purports to redress this injustice in one case, arouses high expectations. It disappoints us simply because we do not find anything of great critical value.

It is just possible, to adopt the easiest explanation, that Miss Hildyard has not made the best of the available material. That she is thoroughly familiar with this material is evident from her bibliography, which in itself is a work of considerable research; it should be remembered that most of Lockhart's contributions to the magazines of the period are anonymous, and the difficulty of identifying them is further complicated by the common practice of collaboration. The famous article on the

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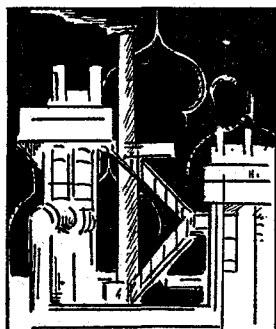
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Cockney School of Poetry is a case in point. Moreover, the excavator is not much helped by stylistic criteria; these reviewers all wrote with the same Ciceronian roundnesses and impersonality. It is not suggested, therefore, that Miss Hildyard has in any sense failed in her researches; the possibility is rather that she has set out with a too narrow definition of criticism. Most of her selections (all but five) are in the nature of personal judgments; whereas one expected a fair proportion of definitions and generalizations, such, for example, as the passage on the limitations of biography in the last chapter of the "Life of Scott." But perhaps after all we are expecting too much. Perhaps Lockhart was not primarily a critic at all. He called himself a "reviewer," and there is a possibility that the functions of the critic and the reviewer are quite distinct. In that case, all that is wrong with Miss Hildyard's book is its title; the word "criticism" ought not to have entered into it.

How shall we distinguish reviewing and criticism? Is the one activity inductive, the other deductive? Hardly; for though criticism must be based on principles, those principles must in turn be based on practice. Even metaphysical criticism, of the indefinite type favored by Coleridge in his weaker moments, is not an attempt to subsume literature under metaphysical absolutes; it is rather an attempt to find metaphysical analogies for psychological events. Criticism, if it is to be a consistent activity, must be in the nature of an inductive science. What, then, is reviewing? "A humble and trivial function," Lockhart would have replied.

For we adhere to our old-fashioned notion [he wrote on one occasion] that when a man of rich endowments makes his first appearance, or offers the first specimen of what seems destined to be the main monument of his literary energy . . . it is the primary duty of reviewers to think not of themselves but of their author; to put the rein on indulgence in any sort of display except the display of his qualities; to aim, in short, with a single heart at the encouragement of his zeal by awakening the curiosity and sympathy of his and their public.

Such a function excludes "all chance of formal, original, or would-be original, disquisition on the part of the journalist." It excludes, in effect, criticism.

There is much to be said for this old-fashioned notion of reviewing, and our literary periodicals today would be much brighter and busier if they could adopt it. It cuts out the cackle. It gets down to realities—of diction, plot, idea, morals, and so forth—and then to personalities. It means hard hitting, and the sensitive suffer; witness Keats. The trouble comes from the fact that the kind of intelligence needed in a good reviewer has decided limitations; and though the editor and the reviewer may be aware of these limitations and prepared to make allowances for them, as well as to take advantage of them, the public has no such discrimination, and accepts the arbitrary directions of a traffic-controller for the final judgment of posterity. A reviewer must have, if not a hard heart, at least a decisive manner. Such a mind is not likely to have much patience with originality—which at first sight looks like obscurity—or with mysticism. Walter Bagehot drew attention to the limitations of the type in his admirable essay on the First Edinburgh Reviewers.

A clear, precise, discriminating intellect shrinks at once from the symbolic, the unbounded, the indefinite. The misfortune is that mysticism is true. There certainly are kinds of truth, borne in as it were instinctively on the human intellect, most influential on the character and the heart, yet hardly capable of stringent statement, difficult to limit by an elaborate definition.

Such was Wordsworth's philosophy of nature, and the misfortune was that Lord Jeffrey, about whom Bagehot is writing, "did not believe a word of it."

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His cool, sharp, collected mind revolted from its mysticism; his detective intelligence was absorbed in its apparent fallaciousness; his light humor made sport with the subtleties of the preacher.

Lockhart said much the same—he talked of the “heaviness and unharmony” of the “Prelude,” and thought Wordsworth’s philosophy “all an airy sham.” But Lockhart was not consistent—a reviewer need not be—and spoke on another occasion of Wordsworth’s essential *manliness*, and in one of his letters there is a sentence which is perhaps the best thing ever said in appreciation of that poet:

He strikes me as having more about him of that sort of sober, mild, sunset kind of gentleness, which is so dear to me from the recollections of Euripides and the tender parts of the Odyssey, than any English poet ever possessed, save Shakespeare, the possessor of all.

His appreciation of Cobbett, too, was from the heart rather than the head. But when we think of Lockhart the stinging reviewer, the “scorpion” as he was called, need we do more, to temper our judgment, than remember Lockhart the author of the “Life of Scott,” one of the greatest human documents in our language?

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The Dogs. By Ivan Nazhivin. Translated from the Russian. J. B. Lippincott Company. \$2.50.

THE impresario will tell you that it is not always best to be the first to bring out something new; in fact, it is better to let someone else make the experiment. Then, if it succeeds, you can “analyze” it and mix a small portion with the standard pap that you have been serving your public all along. In this way you will never have any failures, never pass a dividend, and when the time comes for you to die they will name an art theater after you. It must be a similar reasoning that leads our publishers to bring out books like “The Dogs” by Ivan Nazhivin. Anything Russian is still something of a novelty on the literary market. And since he was born and lived over forty years in that country, Mr. Nazhivin’s story, in certain respects, is characteristically Russian. It is laid close to the soil. It is told with Tolstoyan simplicity. And occasionally it shows the world stripped of its conventions—something else that we have come to look for in Russian writers. But that is the extent to which it can be said to represent the Russian genius. For the rest, aside from these virtues, it is no different from the pap, whether Dutch, Scandinavian, French, English, German, Chinese, Balkan, or American, that is regularly consumed by our public—and about as representative of Russian literature—though this does not necessarily put the two authors on the same plane—as James Oliver Curwood, another dog-story writer, would be of our own.

One would let “The Dogs” go with a few words, for it is innocuous enough, were it not for the fact that one of our leading reviews has called it “wholly admirable” and another “possibly immortal.” This reminds us that the canny impresario never depends solely upon his own efforts to put his diluted novelty across. No, he recognizes the function of criticism, for he knows that without the aid of a few watery reviewers his stockholders would be sadly betrayed. In view, therefore, of the remarkable praise that has been given “The Dogs,” let us look at it more closely. Dogs are its principal characters—pointers, borzois, mongrels. The world is supposed to be seen through their eyes. They comment on their masters and make naive misobservations that very cutely reveal the truth of the situation. In reality, however, this is simply a device employed by the author, the same device of personification that we all

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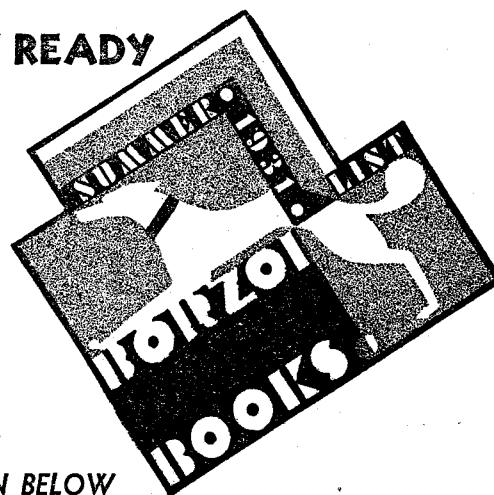
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* Drama. † Comedy. ‡ Musical.

FILMS

- Le Million—Little Carnegie—57 St. E. of 7 Ave.
- News Reel—Embassy—B'way and 46 St.
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- The Five Year Plan—Central—47 St. and B'way.
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employed in our schooldays when we wrote *How It Feels to Be an Old Button*. The fact is that there is almost no new observation of dogs in Mr. Nazhivin's book; practically nothing is added to our understanding of them. This was inevitable, of course, since to Mr. Nazhivin they were merely a device, a means to an end. What was this end? Why, of course! It was to register a belated protest on the Russian Revolution, which had the regrettable effect of forcing Mr. Nazhivin to flee from his native land and take up residence in Belgium. As a kind of retaliation, therefore, using the dogs for a foreground, he has painted a picture of the revolution which for luridness and naivete might be compared to a Hollywood director's conception of 1789. And to "balance" his anti-Sovietism he has inserted an uncomplimentary portrait of the Czar's uncle, the Grand Duke "Nikita" (who flicks out a dog's eyeball with his whip)—again with the touch of a von Stroheim. Finally it appears that his purpose is to show that certain members of the imperial family were, it is true, very bad; but the general run of the upper classes was good; therefore the revolution should never have taken place. In other words, he has written his novel to illustrate his political position. It is the yelp of a defeated sentimentalist, and, although its scene is Russia, it has so little to do with the Russian spirit that no customs officer would know the difference.

As we wrap up the book and mail it to a sentimental old aunt in the country who is fond of puppies, some dismaying questions occur to us. Why are these diluted importations invariably so well received? Is it possible that we have got so that we now prefer dilution? Can we no longer absorb reality straight? Has our digestion reached the point where it actually needs adulterants? Is there any relation between this and our national passion for soda water? Is it true that, to stomach a few drops of essential flavor, we must fill up with water and gas?

GERALD SYKES

Drama Summary

THIS column has been occupied by so many critics since October, and they have differed so much from one another, that it may appear presumptuous for the least professional of them all to attempt a summary of the season just closing. Yet by being last he incurs the duty of speaking last, and since duty must be done he can only hope that what he writes will not be read by his predecessors.

The first thing that strikes even an amateur observer of the season is the success of its best plays. Not every successful play has been a good one, and not every good play has been successful, but on the whole it would seem that the general judgment has been right. The theatrical business is having its bad days along with every other business, and a number of houses this winter must have been dark more nights than not. Yet it is substantially true that whenever a respectable performance has been offered to the public, the public has decently responded. The most profitable plays, I take it, have been "Once in a Lifetime," "Grand Hotel," "Tomorrow and Tomorrow," "The Vinegar Tree," "The Barretts of Wimpole Street," "Private Lives," "Camille," "Elizabeth the Queen," "Melo," "Five Star Final," "The Silent Witness," "As You Desire Me," "In the Best of Families," "The House Beautiful," "Mrs. Moonlight," "Tonight or Never," and the Gilbert and Sullivan revivals by the Civic Light Opera Company.

That, I also take it, is virtually a list of the best plays that have been produced. I have not seen "Mrs. Moonlight"

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or "Tonight or Never," and I am very well aware that there is much difference of opinion about several other pieces on the list—particularly "The House Beautiful." Nor do I like "As You Desire Me," the success of which I must confess is incredible to me, or "In the Best of Families," whose continued run argues a deeper vulgarity in mankind than the darkest cynic might have thought possible. With these comparatively few exceptions, however, the list stands. Add that most of the very bad things have failed immediately, and that within the limits imposed by its theater the Mooney play "Precedent" has actually flourished at the Provincetown, and the situation looks more hopeful still. In the case of only two failures—"Devil in the Mind" and "Rock Me, Julie"—is one forced to regret that an unfavorable decision was so swiftly made. Something similar might be said for William Bolitho's "Overture," though the note of uncertainty in this posthumous tragedy was very plainly to be heard.

There was no play by O'Neill (who will make up for it next year with the trilogy called "Mourning Becomes Electra"), none by Ibsen, very few by Shakespeare (though Jane Cowl's "Twelfth Night" and Eva Le Gallienne's "Romeo and Juliet" were good enough in compensation), and but one by Shaw. The Theater Guild was only moderately acclaimed for its production of "Getting Married," as indeed it was throughout the season, at least after "Elizabeth the Queen" left town. Its "Roar China" and "Green Grow the Lilacs" were well worth experimenting with, however, if "Miracle at Verdun" was not; but perhaps the essential thing about experiments is that their results are difficult to predict, and the Theater Guild deserves every praise for its willingness to keep experimenting. The Civic Repertory Theater likewise did well to bring Jean Giraudoux's "Siegfried" over from France, to give "Alison's House" a chance which it might not have had in any other theater, and to revive "Camille." It remains only to mention, as a third group enterprise which must be welcome to anyone not wholly confined in his interests to the contemporary and the commercial, the performance of Wycherley's "The Country Wife" at the New School for Social Research, now soon to be followed by Ben Jonson's "The Alchemist."

MARK VAN DOREN

Films

Fantasy All the Way

RENE CLAIR'S "Le Million" (Little Carnegie), like his earlier "Sous les Toits de Paris," is one of those rare pictures that make you their willing captive immersed in their mood and letting yourself be carried away on the wings of their fancy. In "Le Million" the fancy is much more exuberant than it was in the other picture, but it enforces submission upon you just as effectively, so that like everybody else around you, you inevitably exclaim: "What charm! What invention! What fun!" This spontaneous reaction, confirmed by the laudations you hear on all sides, is sufficient proof of the unique qualities of the film. It is the work of an artist who sees beyond the obvious and who can view the comedy of life with a good-natured cynicism that proclaims its authentic "sophistication." From under this gentle leg-pulling there gradually emerges a fantastic world inhabited by not quite normal human beings who now and again burst into dancing and singing that reveals their hidden kinship with puppets. It is René Clair's great achievement as an artist that though his characters' behavior is at times so grotesquely fantastic, it never appears incongruous with their surroundings or inconsistent with their

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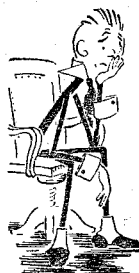
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more normal actions. But the achievement is a tour de force that only disguises its fundamental weakness.

The problem that René Clair sets himself to solve in "Le Million" is the old one of screen musical comedy. It has repeatedly been proved that the forms of singing and dancing seen in stage musical comedy are intolerably false and incongruous when transferred to the screen. The only successful treatment so far devised by Hollywood has been the use of plots in which singing and dancing are a natural part of the action. Stories of back-stage life have been particularly in vogue in this connection. The field, however, is a small one, and it has been explored so thoroughly that with the public grown indifferent to such stories Hollywood has practically stopped making musical pictures. Now René Clair attempts to justify musical comedy by means that are directly opposite to those of Hollywood. Instead of making singing and dancing more natural, more in accord with the daily life of his characters, he makes the daily life of his characters more unnatural, more in accord with stage singing and dancing. Thus the story of a lost lottery ticket becomes a series of madcap adventures in which the normal is hardly distinguishable from the eccentric. Clair's success in this daring experiment reveals the measure of his talent as an entirely convincing and vastly entertaining interpreter of human foibles. But his fantastic treatment is even more restricted in its application than the naturalistic one of Hollywood. Moreover, his approach to the problem of musical comedy is confined to the choice of subject, whereas the only way to solve the problem is to discover a cinematic form that would make dancing and singing spring as freely from the nature of the screen entertainment as they spring from the nature of the stage performance.

One hoped that Lubitsch's "The Smiling Lieutenant" (Criterion) might come more effectively to grips with this problem than did "The Love Parade" or "Monte Carlo." The hope has not been fulfilled. With his interest centered on the comic minutiae of the princely fairyland that he so loves to depict, Lubitsch shows his concern with the formal problem of musical comedy only in so far as he tries to disguise singing and dancing in the conventional unreality of his fairy tale. In this he is not unlike René Clair, except that his somewhat less fantastic subject matter follows more closely in the footsteps of the stage tradition. Even in its particular medium of gay and polished naughtiness, however, "The Smiling Lieutenant" seems to be not nearly so subtle as its predecessors. Highly amusing as it often is, its persistent erotic emphasis, addressed all too clearly to frustrated wives and young couples, rather smacks of vulgarity. Nor does it show any great inventiveness in those quaint and twisted comic effects that are usually associated with the name of Lubitsch. In short, one is inclined to regard "The Smiling Lieutenant" as a routine "Lubitsch picture" with very little of "Lubitsch" that is of importance.

Two German films, "Liebeswalzer" (Eighth Street Playhouse) and "The Beggar's Opera" (Warner), come within the same category of musical pictures, but neither of them contributes anything to the solution of the problem here discussed. "Liebeswalzer" is a conventional musical comedy with a Graustarkian story which will please those who can admire royalty even when it is caricatured. "The Beggar's Opera," though perhaps more artistically ambitious, also fails to produce a genuine thrill. The work of G. W. Pabst, the film is characteristic of this director's extraordinary preference for discordance and distortion. There is unrelieved morbidity in this picture, and it jars on one's mind through its gruesome theme, its mixture of styles, and its persistent effort to appear different by pictorial and psychological attitudinizing. One leaves the picture utterly puzzled by the artistic impulse that found expression in this shrill and somber fantasy.

ALEXANDER BAKSHY

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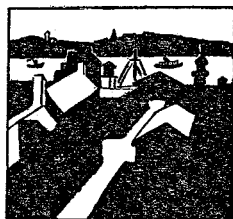
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